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# The Men I Killed



*Also by*  
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C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

A Brass Hat In No Man's Land

BRIGADIER-GENERAL  
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MICHAEL JOSEPH LTD.  
*17 & 18, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.2*

FIRST PUBLISHED      AUGUST 1937  
SECOND IMPRESSION AUGUST 1937  
THIRD IMPRESSION    AUGUST 1937  
FOURTH IMPRESSION AUGUST 1937  
FIFTH IMPRESSION    SEPTEMBER 1937  
SIXTH IMPRESSION    SEPTEMBER 1937  
SEVENTH IMPRESSION / ON OCTOBER 1937

*Set and printed in Great Britain by William Brendon & Son,  
Ltd., at the Mayflower Press, Plymouth, in Baskerville type,  
twelve point, leaded, on a toned antique-wove paper made  
by John Dickinson, and bound by James Burn.*

## DEDICATION

*To the genuine fighters of all nations who stuck it to the end in the front line, and to the genuine conscientious objectors of all nations who stuck it to the end in jail, this book is dedicated.*



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## *Author's Note*

YEARS ago, when I was young, I used to spend many hours in the company of sailors and soldiers, trying to make them tell me stories of their exploits. I was very young !

There was one warrior in particular, a naval commander who had recently served in the Egyptian War and had been present at the taking of a stockade in Africa. Stockades appealed to me ; in Burma, my father and uncle had done a bit of jungle fighting, and were wont to talk of stockades when the port was going round, while I would listen with mouth open and eyes agog. But through all the talk I was puzzled. . . . Despite the fighting, nobody ever seemed to be killed on either side.

And so I thought ; and one day I asked my naval friend : " Have you ever killed anybody with your sword ? " He looked at me and replied in a whisper : " Hush ! my boy, we don't talk about that sort of thing." I thought that was queer. I wondered what was the good of going to war when no one talked about what they did there.

" Are you ashamed ? " I asked the Commander later. " Are you ashamed of what you do in wars—when you kill men ? I don't understand



it. If it is all right, why don't you want to talk about it?" He was very tactful, for I was very young. "You'll understand—when you grow up," he said. And so the matter was dropped. Until something happened.

My naval friend was very fond of a glass of whisky, and one day when I was storm-bound with him on the West Coast of Scotland in a yacht, I went down into the saloon and to my astonishment saw him thrusting at the reclining figure of a man enveloped in a jungle suit of white (a flowing dressing-gown), with a towel twisted round his head like a turban.

"Abdul Bim, I've got you!" shouted the Commander, as he lunged forward, cheering, with a poker. "You're dead! Dead as a door nail. The victory's mine, the stockade is taken . . ." Then the Commander helped himself to another drink. It was a strange sight. I sat down in silence on the companion-way and watched to see what would happen next. But nothing did happen. Post-battle refreshment, the war won, was to me less interesting than the war itself. So I slunk off to bed.

Next morning, when I arrived at the breakfast table all seemed silent. (I had always been taught that the best people remain silent at breakfast.) But later, when the sun was over the yard-arm, I thought it safe to chance some remark about Abdul Bim. "Tell me more about Abdul Bim," I asked, standing in front of the Commander, who towered above me as he looked at

himself in the glass. He nearly bounced through the deck above. He looked very shocked as he leaned towards me, the forefinger of his right hand placed warningly at his lips, and his hair, usually well-plastered down, standing on end in an undressed condition. His breath was bated. "What do you know about Abdul Bim?" he demanded. "What do you know?"

"Not much," I told him. "Except that you killed him. You put your sword through him. . . ." He cut me short. "Shush!" he interjected. "You mustn't say that. We in the Service—we—we—but how did you know? We—we never talk of those things. Who told you?" he invited.

I told him what I had seen the previous night. The dressing-gown dummy, the poker, the thrust. I told him what he had said.

He protested. "I must've had a nightmare. Promise me this: never tell a single soul I killed Abdul Bim. It—it simply isn't done," he added.

I promised. . . .

Ten years passed. On a very hot Sunday I walked into a well-known club in St. James's Square and called for an iced gin and ginger beer. The times were hectic. King Edward VII had just been crowned; the Boer War had just been won—and I had become a soldier. In a corner of the club I saw my old naval friend. We talked and drank together. "You're quite a man now," he exclaimed. "How time flies!"

I nodded and smiled. "Do you remember the death of old Abdul Bim?" I asked him.

He sat up. "Shush! What did I tell you?" he reminded me.

But I was not so very young now. "That's all bosh," I said. "I don't believe in that sort of thing. Why be ashamed of what you do, even though you may have done wrong or made a mistake? But you made no mistake when you killed Bim and took the stockade. You can't have war without killing or being killed. So why the mystery? . . . And there's another thing: I've just been through three wars in three years and in the big one (South Africa) most awful lies are being told to make people believe all sorts of things. What's the good of it?"

His reply came slowly. He was very grave. "Look here, my boy; you're in the Service now. You have to remember that if you want to get on you must be popular—but you will not be popular if you give away the show and criticize your seniors. Draw a veil over the black side of war. Instead, draw on the vast amount of virtue, valour, and courage which comes out in every campaign. . . . And forget about Abdul Bim. . . . Shush! Here comes a friend of mine. I'll introduce you. He counts a lot, and has the devil of a pull behind the scenes. . . . Colonel, allow me to present to you a young friend of mine, just back from the war—Crozier—he's home with a detachment for the Coronation. . . . Frank, this is Colonel Blimp."

We talked. And in the midst of our talking Colonel Blimp said to the Naval Commander as he called for another round of drinks : " Gad, sir, you're right ! The best thing you ever did in your life was to accept the surrender of that damned fellow Abdul Bim. I remember reading your dignified despatch in the *London Gazette*. But, you know, I can't help thinking it would have been better in the long run, and have made a better story, if you had bumped him off—or he had bumped you off ! . . . But then, that's a forbidden subject. . . ."

" Well, I don't know," replied the sailor. " It is seldom possible to tell the whole truth in official circles."

The years creep on, and with them comes change—but not in one respect !

Roy Campbell has hit the mark. He says :

" You praise the firm restraint with which they write,  
I'm with you there of course,  
They use the snaffle and the curb alright,  
But where's the bloody horse ? "

The year 1937 is much the same as was 1902, in regard to " good form " and " official etiquette." Blimp still reigns, unfortunately, in places of greater responsibility where he can make a fool of himself more easily—and do more damage.

England, in spite of him, survived the Great

War, and now a younger and better generation demands the truth. Hence these pages.

To hell with humbug ! Let us learn to join with Roy Campbell in his search for the sanguinary horse. What is that horse ? Merely truth ! And if one joins this hunt one must become a rebel—not necessarily a violent revolutionary based on force (the Russian Revolution, necessary though it was, teaches a lesson about that), but an advocate of the ballot-box, based on real equality, a violent opponent of Blimp and all he stands for ; one able, at short notice, and without much provocation, to “ explode ” when men and women say they are satisfied with their lot—satisfied because they have “ got ” a lot, and are not contented with a little—satisfied on folly and fed on pretence. What a pity, oh, what a pity, the Church of England will not lead a movement back to God—not religion !

F. P. C.

## *Chapter 1*

### THE MEN FOR WHOM I KILLED

THE reason why the British Army is unpopular with British youth—according to Mr. Duff Cooper<sup>1</sup> in one of his Parliamentary utterances which are now notorious—is because certain people have written war books which not only describe the horrors of war in all their stark brutality and ineffectual suffering, but place the blame for much of the tragedy that happened on the shoulders of the generals.

Obviously, this was a hit at Mr. Lloyd George. Unfortunately, said Mr. Duff Cooper, the generals themselves did not write the books. Consequently, the people got hold of the wrong end of the stick. Dull people write dull books. And no one could accuse the average British general of being anything but dull outside of the smoking-room, the club, the hunting-field, or the golf course. It is not in these places, nor on the playing-fields of Eton, that wars are avoided.

Most English people are in agreement that war, as we know it to be, is horrible. It is true to say that most English people are opposed to war. But, alas, that does not mean to suggest that because of that sentiment most people are either

<sup>1</sup> Now First Lord of the Admiralty, and if anything in a more dangerous office.

pacifists or know how to prevent war. It simply means that it is fashionable to-day to say : "I am against war," but it is not fashionable to say : "I am never going to have anything more to do with war in any circumstances !" Would to God that were the prevailing urge to-day.

There lies the difference between the pacifist and the individual who, jealous of his respectability, is against war, but who believes he could not continue to be a respectable citizen if he refused at all costs to take part in any kind of war preparations or war operations. There is the essence of the problem, for peace is a personal affair. If everybody declined to fight there could not be a war.

Unfortunately, there is to-day such an appalling ignorance displayed on the subject of how to acquire peace, how to keep peace, that the only way to get the present Government, or any other government for that matter, to consider the right approach, would be to send them back to school to be taught by men like Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Gerald Heard, and others, at some central institution for the Peace-Blind.

I suggest that the Society of Friends might take a hand in the especial case of Mr. Duff Cooper, who is so obviously in desperate need of individual tuition for the onerous duty he is attempting to perform at the War Office.<sup>1</sup> Four square meals a day are undoubtedly good for the soldier ; to be able to listen to the wireless in barracks is a necessity of modern life and by

<sup>1</sup> For War Office read Admiralty.

no means an indulgence. But these very admirable suggestions for improving the lot of the British soldier have nothing whatsoever to do with the ultimate safety of the British Empire.

God is supposed to be on the side of the British Empire, in front of it and behind it at all times, and I am not at all certain if the average Tory M.P. does not regard God as something personified by the kindly and benevolent country squire—something akin in make-up to the fine old English gentleman of property—and that His religion is something to do with churches, crowns, and conscription, crucifixion being a thing apart. . . . And so we have the heresy hunt of to-day, and the remarkable accusation that Canon “Dick” Sheppard is a heretic because he expounds his religion from the point of view of Christ, and not from the point of view of the benevolent old English country gentleman who manages his estates with great care, who looks after his tenants to a certain extent, and sees to it that they go to war (or lose their cottages and employment if they do not) whenever the flag is affronted or the financial bubble has to burst under the economic strain.

I regard as a good thing, pregnant with great possibilities, the rift in the Established Church in regard to war and the divergence of the points of view of various sections of society to-day. It at least proves that people are at long last beginning to think for themselves and use the intelligence that God gave them to distinguish



between right and wrong in things national and international as well as in things spiritual and personal. But there is a type of person who never does think, who never has thought, and is never likely to think more clearly now, but who is urgent at all times to confuse the issue by his ponderous absurdities.

Two illustrations will suffice to show the enormous gap between the views of those comfortably-situated people who are content to let things remain as they are, and those who are marked down by authority as the potential cannon fodder of to-morrow if things *are* allowed to remain as they are.

The view is often expressed by those who are well-off, who are very rich, who have possessions to lose, that pacifists should not be allowed to eat—in other words, that they should starve—because they disapprove of war and desire to protect their country by other means than war. How terribly wrong they are, in more ways than one ! Do these curious people not realize that war over England will mean a drastic curtailment in our national food supply, that more than the declared pacifists will starve ? Or is it that they are remembering the last war and are hopeful of exceeding their rations once again ?

My mind goes back to the middle of the Great War, when food was severely rationed, but when, despite their so-called patriotism, those very people who now say that pacifists should be starved, were doing their damndest to wangle

extra supplies, using their wealth and their position to keep their stomachs full and their minds contented with well-fed patriotism. There was no more plentiful supply of food during the last war than on some of the big estates in the north of Scotland, where rationing was unknown and where the war was hardly ever heard of. Is it only a coincidence, I wonder, that during the past few months so many wealthy people have been buying up estates in the Highlands and the lonely places of Northern and Western Scotland as retreats from the bombers and as larders against the coming days of national starvation?

If the pacifist were listened to and believed, if his ways of peace were adopted, the food supplies of everyone, rich and poor alike, would be for ever assured.

So much mystic rubbish is talked about peace, so much cant and humbug. War has a glamour; peace, apparently, has none. War is something real, concrete. Peace, it seems, is just an ideal, abstract. War is the method of obtaining peace. Peace, alas, does not seem to be the method of avoiding war. War is necessary. Peace, it seems, is only desirable. And so it goes on and on and on, while the loose talk of responsible people confuses the more. Much of the damage to peace is done by the ill-advised speech of the persons who are "looked up to" by the unfortunate cannon fodder in the working classes, who are in a position to free themselves if they

liked, but who are just as wedded to worn-out beliefs as are their Tory rulers.

His Majesty's Government! Regard them. Do they look as if they could run a war? Do they look like men worthy of being called upon by men of action like Hitler, Lloyd George, Maxton, or Mussolini, to form a coalition to meet some world-devastating emergency apart from war? The idea is impossible. And the Opposition, as an alternative government, is hampered because it has at its head inexperienced men, following in the footsteps of the "grand old English gentleman" and utterly unable to make up their minds as to what they are going to do about world peace; they are terrified of Hitler, terrified of Mussolini, terrified of Communism, terrified of Fascism, terrified of being considered revolutionaries or "disloyal." That is the only alternative choice to the war-like, yet war-incompetent, gang at present in power.

Mr. Runciman, at one time a good Liberal and now a member of the National Government<sup>1</sup> and a big shipowner, said at a recent Nonconformist Assembly that the members of the present Government individually are peace-lovers and are working strenuously to secure peace throughout the world. But what is the good of "loving" peace—as most men do—if the way to go about achieving it and keeping it is not known?

These are the men who are planning "Defence" at the risk of Peace. These are the men

<sup>1</sup> Since created a peer and resigned from the Government.

who take part daily in humiliating spectacles of Parliamentary debate, with a poverty of idea and a surfeit of egotism, who are more concerned with scoring personal points against their opponents than debating with intelligence and honesty the point at issue, for the sake of their fellow-men who have entrusted them with their country's mortal affairs. For instance, what are we to think when Sir Stafford Cripps is censured by an obscure member for suggesting to workers that they should refuse to manufacture munitions—or when Mr. Mander, notoriously wedded to the principle of Collective Security—which is supposed to be a policy approved by the Conservative Party, and which the National Party pretend to be operating—is accused by Mr. Ormsby-Gore of being a pacifist, to his great annoyance and to the accompaniment of ministerial jeers and laughter?

Absurd—grotesque—pathetic! To be *accused* of being a pacifist! To be *accused* of being anxious to avoid the wholesale slaughter of countless thousands, nay, millions, of defenceless men, women, and children—despite our £1,500,000,000 Defence Bill!

And so it goes on.

It is not clear why Sir Stafford Cripps should not advise workmen to refuse to manufacture munitions which are going to help, in the future, to destroy the British Empire. But what is clear is that Sir Stafford, a highly intelligent lawyer, obviously knows more about what he is talking than do the Blimps who attack him for his sincerity.

Pacifists should be able to travel a long way on the road of progress with men like Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Maxton, and Mr. Pollitt, because these three are consistent in their behaviour, staunch to their ideals, and, up to the moment, incorruptible by power, position, or wealth.

The Coalition Government of 1920-21—which launched the nearest thing to Fascism this country has ever known—sent the Black and Tans and their secret service agitators and assassins to Ireland in order to hamper the work of the army and defeat the objects of the Act of Parliament, which was to give a limited form of self-government to Ireland, North and South. The same tactics, on a different scale, the same loose talk, the same back-stage behaviour are going on in Government circles to-day—which is the reason why Sir Stafford Cripps is right in warning the workers of this country about what is going on before their very eyes camouflaged in the respectable garb of “Defence.”

The money class, through their representatives in Parliament, after they have embarked on any criminal undertaking for the strengthening of the Empire—as was the case in Ireland in 1920-21—will stick at nothing and stoop to anything to blacken the character of any Crown official or responsible officer who may refuse to obey, protest against the treachery, or by his honesty impede the work. Well do I know this from my own experience in Ireland, during the Black and Tan revolt, when men were dying because of

their betrayal by those who would persecute the pacifist.

The men I killed stand witness to the folly against which I now protest. If to write the truth about war and to lay the blame, with proof, upon those who lead the way to war and, having led, lose all direction, and by their incompetence and criminal evasion of the true facts pile up the slaughter and the suffering and the injustice and martyrdom in order to protect their own reputations and their own skins in the misguided belief that God is necessarily on the side of their right—if to tell of things I have done, of men I have sent to their doom, of the agonies of brave men caught in a Frankenstein war-machine created by their fellow-countrymen and so-called leaders—if to speak of these things in the hope that the wickedry will never be repeated is to make the British Army unpopular with British youth and to reveal the senselessness of man's devilish destruction of man, then I stand condemned by Mr. Duff Cooper. . . . But I thank God that I am in great company and on the side of brave men and good.

A lifetime of professional soldiering has brought me, by painful ways, to the realization that all war is wrong, is senseless. When we were fighting for the victory of war I was in the front line. To-day I am glad that I am still in the front-line—fighting for the victory and blessing of peace. And by my side are thousands of my old comrades of the battle-field; we are soldiers of the

army of peace as prepared for martyrdom as ever we were. We have no illusions about that, even if we had illusions about war.

But the bluff of the masses continues, with all its hideous possibilities. They talk of defence and count its value in hundreds of millions of pounds. But—defence of what? It is defence of the war-system, NEVER defence of the peace. If war comes again, which it certainly will—Heaven help us!—if our elected leaders are allowed to build their monument to folly, are those same men capable of conducting it as they have prepared for it? His Majesty's Government! Look at them, I ask you again. They have to rely so pitifully upon their military advisers; but could they possibly write an essay on National Defence, in so many thousand words, in order to convince a panel of High Court judges of their sagacity, sincerity, and selflessness?

I am convinced that not one member of His Majesty's Government, or of His Majesty's Opposition, would succeed. Indeed, I believe they would not even secure half-marks! They talk of defence when they know that the word is a travesty of the truth and that there is no such thing as defence. They know, as Mr. Baldwin has admitted, that "the bomber will always get through." They know, as Sir William Beveridge wrote recently in *The Times*, that: "In the last war families waited for bad news about their fighting men in the trenches; in a new war fighting men may wait for bad news about

their families at home.” And they know that by their cunning regimentation of the whole nation, by their forming volunteer squads of nurses and doctors, of fire-fighters and poison-gas cleansers, by their propaganda about gas-masks and bomb-shelters, by their provision of employment in the manufacture of war material in order to reduce the dole queues, by their insidious and ceaseless talk of the “potential enemy” and the “defence of the home,” they are creating a mass war-mentality that will drive us as a nation along the road of mass-destruction when that dread zero hour falls.

Oh, the shame of it !

The military men—in the widest sense of the description—need not flatter themselves about the ignorance of the politicians, because in reality they are no better—indeed, they may be considered worse—because they are supposed to know their jobs, while politicians are not elected to Parliament for being supposed to know anything at all !

Officers of the Royal Navy argue about the capital ship (the battleship) versus the bomber ; they draw their inspirations from the petty-fogging Spanish War which is being fought with such atrocious cruelty while I write, instead of telling the grim truth about what happened at Malta in 1936 when the capital ships slunk away to Alexandria owing to the fear that Mussolini and his aeroplanes would be too much for their safety. That is the lesson of the battleship versus



the air-bomber which is being criminally avoided to-day by those in authority who should know better. Thus is the rest of the country deluded.

Officers of the Army argue with the Royal Air Force as to who should have charge of the ground defence of this country during an air invasion, while the officers of the Air Force claim, quite rightly, to be able to destroy whole localities in the twinkling of an eye, notwithstanding the fact that civilians will mostly suffer. Remember what happened to the little Spanish town of Guernica. Can we read of a horror like that and remain unmoved in the defence of peace?

Yet this particular form of devilish atrocity, which can never be claimed as a "war measure," apparently does not meet with the disapproval of the archbishops and the bishops, to their lasting shame.

Captain Liddell Hart, noted military writer, tells us with all sincerity in the columns of that weather-cock of political views, *The Times*, that in all probability when war breaks out on the Continent, the co-operation of the English forces with the continental would have to be limited to long-range air-bombing of back areas, from bases in this country, simply because a wise enemy would not permit the embarkation or disembarkation of the British Expeditionary Force on either side of the English Channel.

This statement I believe. But I cannot accept the expressed hope of Captain Liddell Hart, in his

book *Europe in Arms*, that in all probability civilization will not crash if there is another war—not because weapons and instruments are not sufficient to bring about that awful crash, but because the opposing generals will be, true to historical type, unable to adapt new ideas and exploit them in the face of worn-out and hampering ideas. In other words, the 300 m.p.h. aeroplane will be shackled to the 3 m.p.h. convoy or column. This condemnation of my profession I believe to be no exaggeration. We have always done that sort of thing. But I cannot bring myself to share Captain Liddell Hart's view that the muddle will be so great that war over England will be avoided. I am of the firm opinion that those who will be in charge of air action on the Continent will be sufficiently powerful to do the right thing (militarily speaking !) and insufficiently stupid to do the wrong thing. In point of fact the conclusions arrived at by Captain Liddell Hart in the columns of *The Times* that British Expeditionary Forces would in all probability be unable to leave these shores is a contradiction of his suggestion that the opposing generals would muddle the whole business so completely that a stalemate would be quickly inevitable. The British Expeditionary Force would not be contained in these islands against its wish because the enemy had done the "wrong" thing. Rather would the reverse be the case.

Defence ! What crimes are being committed

in thy name. There is no defence when nations prepare for war.

General Sir Ian Hamilton said recently that if certain of the great powers of the world, including England, would lay down their arms as an encouragement to the others to follow the lead, we would find the way out to peace and sanity. That is the sort of reasoning which should be permeating the minds of both the Government and the Opposition to-day ; but not having the proper leaders, and not knowing how to lead, they are powerless to grasp the tremendous significance of Sir Ian Hamilton's suggestion.

Of course, it is surprising that such a suggestion has come from a senior soldier like Sir Ian Hamilton. But—there it is ! It has arrived. My regret is that the great truth should have been uttered by a general on the retired list who, quite wrongly, may be accused of having had his day. If only it had come from the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is on the active list of the Established Church, and who would never be accused of having had his day, or having anything to surrender, because of his sagacity and straightforward understanding !

Neither Sir Ian Hamilton nor the Archbishop of Canterbury had very much to do with the planning of victory during the last war ; but it cannot be said with any justice that the Archbishop of Canterbury is in a position, in his official and ecclesiastical capacity, to plan anything but progress. And nobody outside of a

lunatic asylum would suggest that war-victory and progress are synonymous.

In the old days if a Peer of the Realm were tried by his peers, the bishops used to retire during certain of the proceedings because it was not considered desirable that they should mix themselves up with the miseries of the moment in regard to the administration of the law. Well, it always appears to me when a discussion is taking place in the House of Lords concerning rearmament, war, or defence, that the proper thing for the spiritual peers to do is to register their arguments and protests against the iniquity of rearmament and war-seeking under the pretence of defence, and then quietly withdraw, satisfied, and at peace with their consciences, that they have done the right thing, that they have expressed the Christian point of view in unmistakable words and in accordance with the Word of God.

They do not do that. Why, in God's name, I know not. Instead, they argue as interested and partial laymen in a matter about which they can know nothing, and should know very little, except that it is wrong according to their religious principles, which should be inviolable.

Yet, what do we hear? We listen to the Archbishop of Canterbury saying that war is justified in the name of "Defence," and to the Archbishop of York saying that "it is permissible for Christians on certain occasions to kill" (or words to that shocking effect). Now, if I, who was

taught to do the killing, and did it, and was blessed at the drum-head religious services for doing it, had uttered that treachery, it is only what might be expected to come from the feelingless heart of a hardened soldier who has tramped in the blood of his brothers. Only it was by that tragic road that I came at last to the truth. . . .

To-day, I do not think that there is in this land a more beloved man than Canon "Dick" Sheppard. He is beloved and respected by his brother-clergymen and most laymen alike. It has been said of him that he could lead the majority of the nation's people anywhere, save in the direction of pacifism. But I do not believe that to be true. I believe the day will come when Canon Sheppard will lead the whole nation to pacifism because his mission is based firmly on Christian ethics, on fundamental religion, wise reasoning and great love. This has been proved by the many adherents who are being won by him to regard security and Christianity as identical. It is not Canon Sheppard's fault that the discoveries of science have rendered war, as an instrument of national policy, unsafe and unsuitable; it is not his fault that in the past, when the Christian faith was emerging, that war was regarded as justifiable and humane and was fought out in an arena between picked fighting men with the civilian population looking on; nor is it his fault that before the great upheaval of 1914 the problem of war seemed less a contradiction of the way of Christ than was really

the case, as the subject was neither thought about nor talked about by the clergy as it is to-day. Canon Sheppard is not concerned with defence. He is concerned with Christian welfare. But it so happens that while, unfortunately, Christian behaviour *seems* out of date among the majority of the bishops, defence as we know it is out of date—completely and hopelessly—because there is no such thing as defence to-day, thanks to man's ingenuity and the growing perfection of the destroying aeroplane.

That portion of the 37th Article of Religion which deals with warfare . . . "It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the magistrate, to wear weapons and serve in the wars" . . . is also out of date, and was originally made by the State at a time when religious feeling was running dangerously high after the official Roman Catholic Church had been abolished in this country.

Mr. Duff Cooper has been using the last paragraph of the 37th Article of Religion as a stick with which to beat the backs of the pacifist clergymen ; but he does not realise that so long as there is a Christian code laid down within the Gospels, and so long as there are over-riding and amending rules for the application of the teachings of Christ, as laid down in the Articles of Religion, so, too, can it be said that those rules are medieval and merely man-made and based on opportunism. The code of Christ requires no explanatory rules—but the Articles of Religion

were concocted only to make Christianity easier. This may be good enough for Mr. Duff Cooper and the Government's policy of rearmament. But it is not good enough for Canon Sheppard and the growing thousands of people who are being drawn towards his way of thinking and his plan of action.

Ethical rubbish ! I hear the die-hard say. (The die-hard, be it said, who, when the war comes, does not die at all but leaves that part to the betrayed cannon fodder.)

It is a sordid story, the factual history of the drawing up of the Articles of Religion by which many men seek a false escape from their honest conscience. We have wandered far along the road since that day when an English king desired to obtain a divorce which was not permitted by the Roman Catholic Church and is not officially recognized by the Protestant Church to-day. The king's wishes led to friction with the Pope, and so on to the Articles of Religion. When this background is taken into consideration one may be forgiven for regarding with suspicion all man-made acts of religion designed to meet circumstance and opportunity.

That is why I associate so closely the Coronation Service—which is a very beautiful service—with sheer militarism ; and that is why the militaristic point of view is so glibly given tongue in the misguided utterances of bishops, civil servants, profiteers and industrial magnates with money to make or lose. Surely I know,

for it was these very men who had so much to do with the killing of the men I killed.

No doubt the bishops would tell us, if we asked them, that patriotism demands that heroes go forth garbed as soldiers, sailors and airmen to die for their country. But that is incorrect—to put it politely ! In military circles it is a sin to die for the country unless sufficient of the enemy have been killed to justify the sacrifices of a military life for England.

In a book on the South African War which I recently read, the author, who took part only in the passive guerilla stages of that campaign, pointed out that he saw only one English soldier killed in action in nineteen months of warfare, and that even that casualty led to trouble as orders were issued for the curtailment of the activity which led to the “disaster.” The author missed the point, because he was not present at any of the battles : in war it is not a question of how many soldiers are killed, but have the actual lives lost been worth while. Therefore, although the 119th Infantry Brigade lost about 2000 men, to say nothing of all its machine-gun crews, in Bourlon Wood, the position was held while a heaped-up mound of German bodies told the tale. But—six weeks before, I had kicked up a fuss because one life had been lost in No-Man’s-Land without compensatory loss !

That is soldiering. That is good soldiering, although the bishops would probably tell you



that the soldier's first duty was to die for his country. The good soldier's duty is to keep alive for his country and to kill as many men of the other side as he can. *That* is the state to which the 37th Article of Religion has brought us !

It is all a matter of liberty of conscience. We are all supposed to be free and able to exercise our conscience. In the past we have been thus free, until war broke upon us and the military machine stifled conscience and all humanity. From this, Fascism has been bred, and to-day, even before war breaks out, we are becoming more and more the unwilling, unthinking, victims of a vast war-machine of self-destruction which is popularly known by the euphemism of "Defence." Already the subtle regimentation of the entire nation, in preparation for this next war of the people who possess and the people who wish to possess, is a powerful demonstration of the way in which the individual conscience can be stifled or set at naught in the general scheme of things.

Of all the people who inhabit Britain there is one who, officially, has no conscience at all—or, at least, he is not allowed to exercise it. The Lord Chancellor of England is the Keeper of the King's Conscience ; yet one man of all men in the world who should have the sacred right of exercising his conscience in the direction of war-abolition, war-resistance, or pacifism, the King of England is that man because of his power for good.

Unfortunately, if His Majesty were to desire to follow Christ to-morrow in the only true way and become a sworn pacifist like Canon Sheppard, he would most probably be forbidden to do so, as a constitutional monarch, by his Cabinet of Ministers. It is probable that he would have to suffer the indignity, in private, of having some wretched little Cabinet Minister from nowhere, or somewhere, tugging at his coat-tails and forbidding him from swearing allegiance to the King of kings at the High Altar of the Almighty.

Surely it is therefore desirable to alter the Coronation Rite and all that appertains thereto, because it is not fair that there should be placed on one man the terrible onus of being unable to change, when change is so necessary, because his advisers are too stupid, too blind, to see the unmistakable writing on the wall.

And surely, if any woman should have the right to be a pacifist, she is the Queen of England, for not only is she the Queen and a mother, but she is supposed to be the mother of a world-wide nation.

The Coronation Service is of long historic standing and is said to be associated with the legend that "Kings are by God appointed." It would seem reasonable to expect, if it is deemed necessary for a king, on ascending the throne, to receive Divine Grace, that he should do so soon after his accession by going with his consort to church in all humility and in

ordinary clothes to say his prayers and receive Divine blessing. But—no ! A year must pass, while the militaristic exhibition is planned without thought of cost, while the stands are erected and thousands of colonials and foreigners are lured to England, there to be rooked by the profiteering supporters of the pageantry. The King is not more or less a King after his Coronation than before. But hypocrisy, engendered by a State-controlled brand of Christianity, dresses the scene of the dedication to God with the irreligious trappings of military exhibitionism.

Tell me, is it necessary for the King of England, head of a great Christian State, to have a cavalry escort, and streets lined with glistening bayonets, when he goes to and from his crowning ? Roman soldiers, too, did their duty—at the Crucifixion. And they were rather upset about it.

Why should contingents of armed men require to cross the oceans from the corners of our Empire, in order to attend the Coronation, when the King himself could walk all over England and most of his wide-flung dominions unguarded and without escort, and without fear, were it not for the sorry fact that governments act wrongly and do bad things, and that because of their bad works the life of the King may be endangered ?

It is all very well to say that the King is a constitutional monarch and must therefore take the advice of his Ministers, but surely it is wrong if the life of the King, and his people, should be imperilled because that advice is bad.

I have already said somewhere that one of the most exhilarating pageants is the Trooping of the Colour and the return of the King to Buckingham Palace at the head of his Guards ; I would not do away with it at the present moment for all the tea in China, because the expense, even in these times, is comparatively small. I have already said, let a fool lift his hand against the King and if I, for one, am there he will be cut down even if only with an umbrella. But I am not prepared to believe that it is the will of the Almighty that bombs and poison-gas and instruments of destruction should take the place of humanity, or that a ruler is made any stronger and more blessed by a religious ceremony based on humbug and war.

It may be asked, what is all this to do with pacifism ? But then, as I have already explained, I am not a pacifist in the ordinary sense of the word. I am all out to do my best to avert another war and to make the victory of peace secure in the world, and I realize that the present alliance between the Crown and the State Church is of no benefit to mankind, and that if the King of England wished, by the dictates of his own conscience, to keep his country out of war he would be unable to do so owing to the disreputable liaison existing between Church and Government.

It is so easy to say : "Something must be done about this." But unless it is said by the highest authority in the land, nothing can ever

be done about avoiding war. As the King is anointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury during the Coronation Service, on behalf of God, and as he receives Holy Communion from the Archbishop—symbolically the Body and Blood of Christ—and as war is in direct opposition to the teachings of Our Lord, how can there be any possibility of avoiding war when we make a public spectacle of such contradictions and when the Most High (on this earth), according to British standards, is hamstrung and shackled to the military machine which is dedicated to military religion and force ?

It is enough to say that before the world can ever be right, the church leaders throughout the world who acknowledge the Christian Faith, must conform to the dictates of their Founder. That accomplished, the crowned heads of limited monarchies need not, as Christians, distort their religion in order to serve their countries in an un-Christian way.

Well do I remember Dr. Davidson (afterwards Lord Davidson), the Archbishop of Canterbury, coming out to France in 1919 to talk to us Generals. His Grace wished to know how his church could keep in touch with demobilised ex-Servicemen, who, he felt, would lose contact with the chaplains, or the chaplains with them. I told him there was one way, and that was to keep track of every man as he left the demobilization centre fed-up, war-weary and receptive to every kind of propaganda ; if the Archbishop

could induce those men to believe that never again would they be forced to take part in a war against their wishes, that suitable arrangements would be made to secure their country without the necessity of going to a war which would settle nothing, then the Established Church, vowing to make peace safe, would captivate the imaginations of at least 8,000,000 ex-Service men who had fought—to save their country and his church—and who having fought wanted never to have to fight again, or their sons after them.

Was anything done? No, nothing!

Instead, to-day, after all that dying and sacrificing, the insensate murder of fine lives and great hopes, and the dismal aftermath of a hideous war that never could have a victory—to-day, after all that, we are treated to the shameful utterances of church leaders about war and the inevitability of war; and almost everything else of vital importance to the poor are in conformity with that which I heard at Fifth Army Headquarters when the Archbishop of Canterbury came out to see us and ask for our advice. I, for one, am not astonished at the extraordinary, unintelligible opposition to pacifism displayed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

Christians, we are told by the Church, may kill in certain circumstances. I wish the Archbishop would tell us just precisely what these circumstances are.

I know something about killing. Alas, I know

a lot about killing. I know far too much. In the next chapter I want to tell of the execution of a private soldier carried out in accordance with the law of the land and at the direction of the Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies in France. The execution was carried out by me, almost in person. And I saw him die. He was a refined lad, of good family; an upright, honest lad with his young faith and his ideals. He was no rotter deserving to die like that. He was merely fragile. He had volunteered to fight for his country—not at the dictates of a magistrate under the 37th Article of Religion, but at the dictates of his own young heart. He failed. And for that failure he was condemned to die—and he died at the hands of his friends, of his brothers, with the approval of his church.

I want also in this book to tell of the murder of an officer by myself in the execution of what I considered to be my duty, to save the honour of England in the firing-line.

I will be glad to know if my absolution from those killings rests on the assertion of the Archbishop of York that Christians may kill on certain occasions. I have no qualms in the matter myself; neither do I desire earthly forgiveness. I have made my own arrangements in the matter, and done my best. But it would be interesting for the future warriors of future wars if they were to know exactly where they stood in regard to their actions, unprovided for by the Army Act or the Articles of Religion.

The following chapters, about the men I killed and the men for whom I killed, will produce matter which may be of interest to the bishops—the answers to which will be of greater interest to the community.



## Chapter 2

### A COWARD'S CROSS?

AUGUST, 1914. A recruiting office ; an ordinary sort of room. Clerks filling in attestation papers. A few bottle-nose recruiting officers—glad of the pay and glad of the glory. Uniform again ! England at war ! And outside—cager youth, reckless and also glad ; and flags and bands, and clergy triumphant, and patriotic speech-makers. Glad !

A weeping woman ; an ordinary sort of woman, just an ordinary mother. I see her weeping and hear her say : “ Don’t go, Johnny. Don’t leave me, Johnny. . . . You’re all I have . . . Johnny ! ”

But Johnny has caught the fever. How can he stay out, mother or no mother ? Isn’t invasion threatened ? And, anyhow, how can’t he join up when everybody else is doing it ? . . . “ I must, Mother. To *defend* you. If I don’t go, how will you put up with Mrs. Jones’s jeers ? Hasn’t she sent three sons to the war already ? And didn’t Jones say he’d turn them out of the house if they didn’t join up ? ”

“ But you’re not old enough, Johnny. You’re

only seventeen. I'll tell on you to the officer, Johnny. Oh—Johnny!"

"You can't do that, Mother. If you do you'll be a coward. No Crockett<sup>1</sup> was ever a coward . . ."

And so the inevitable happened. If it had not happened that day in August, 1914, it would have happened some other day in August, or in September; for British manhood was roused while the Lion roared. And the more the Kaiser cracked his whip, the more the British Lion roared.

Now, Johnny Crockett loved his mother. And his soul was afire. He was an apprentice in a ship-yard. One day, with luck, he would be a master joiner, able and willing to support his mother in her old age. That was the real Johnny. That was the stuff of his dreams.

I was a silent witness of this drama. While Johnny was taking the King's shilling (and incidentally swearing a false oath on attestation, for he had to say he was eighteen in order to be able to join the merry throng) I spoke to his mother.

"Don't worry," I said. "I'll look after him. I'll see no harm comes to him."

"How can you say that?" she asked. She brushed away a tear in scorn and pulled herself up to her full height. She was a tall, good-looking woman. "How can you stop him from being shot?" she added.

"We shan't be going to the war for a long

<sup>1</sup> The name is fictitious.

time," I countered. "Untrained battalions aren't sent to war . . ."

"They'll all go sooner or later," she replied. She turned and walked away in silence.

I looked after Crockett. I kept an eye on him. I saw that he got home at week-ends when possible ; and finally I took him overseas.

One day in 1915, when the flag was about to fall for a perfect start, I asked him if he were going home for his final leave to say good-bye. "No, sir," Crockett replied. "Why?" I asked in surprise. "I said good-bye, sir, when we left home. . . . I couldn't stand it again."

There was a silence. He saluted, turned about, and marched off.

Six months passed—six months of front-line life in winter. Rain, rain, rain ! Rain and rum and mud and slush and shells. Four days "in" and four days "out." . . . Hell. Sentry go, patrol duty in No-Man's-Land, wet uniform, eternal digging, eternal pumping out, ration parties, carrying parties, working parties. Mining—sniping—bombing. Up to the middle in mud and slush for four days on end ; then another four days cleaning, drilling, sleeping and getting dry again. But, considering all things, the food was good. One of the marvels of the war was not that men got good food in beastly, filthy surroundings in the trenches, but that they got food at all. . . .

Crockett stuck it. On Christmas Day, 1915, he fared as well as the rest—and better, again

considering all things, than Fritz fifty yards away in as bad a bit of the line as was ever held by the Germans.

That dreary winter passed. The signs of Spring peeped through the clouds and men began to sing again. Unfortunately there was a relapse when General Winter took a turn for the worse, and for a week—the most trying week of that trying winter of 1915-16—conditions became such as to be unfit for man or beast in the open. And in the open were we.

Spirits dropped to zero.

One morning, in the midst of this desolation in the firing-line, my adjutant brought me the usual "parade state."

"One man absent, sir!"

"Who?"

"Crockett, of K Company."

"I wonder what's happened to him."

"Drowned, perhaps."

"Where and when was he seen last?"

"On that post at the Serre road."

"Funny!"

A fortnight passed. Hail shining morn! The Spring had come—at last. "Thank God for the sunshine!" I cried as we looked across the River Ancre towards Grandcourt, where the next attack was going to be. "What a life!" the adjutant replied. . . .

"Telegram, sir." An orderly saluted.

I read it. . . . "Number — Rifleman Crockett arrested awaiting escort. A.P.M."

Crockett came before me. Formal evidence of arrest was given. The charge framed was signed by me. And a Field General Court Martial was applied for. Routine took its course.

Before the Court, my adjutant prosecuted in the usual way and preferred a charge of desertion. Crockett did not deny the charge ; but a formal plea of " Not guilty " was entered, in order that the facts might be brought out and noted—in his favour, if possible.

I say " if possible," because no soldier likes condemning a comrade to death, much less carrying out the sentence by shooting in cold blood.

*Would you, reader ?*

These were the facts : Crockett, fed-up, cold, wet to the skin and despondent, had sneaked off from the line under cover of darkness, throwing away his rifle, ammunition, and equipment (a legal ground for a second charge, the maximum punishment for which was also death) and, obtaining civilian clothes from somewhere, had made his way to the coast where he was caught. It was a very easy thing to leave the line. But it was difficult to get far without being captured. And to hope to get to England was idle.

The exact circumstances of Crockett's capture evade me ; they are of no material moment. Probably he was given away by some civilian while in search of food—perhaps by some mother

whose son had been killed or was still standing up to the strain.

It is customary on active service for the confirmation of the death sentence to be reserved for the Commander-in-Chief, who alone can confirm, remit, commute, or annul. In this case it was so. But in order that the Commander-in-Chief should know the minds of the various commanders below him—battalion, brigade, divisional, corps, and army in this case—as to the desirability of execution (which has nothing to do with the facts of any particular case, the recorded evidence not being sent to them for perusal), an opinion by commanders is sent based on frequency of the crime, the state of the troops, the weather, and so on.

As Crockett's commanding officer, it became my duty to initiate the chain of opinion which would eventually be placed along with the proceedings, the report of the judge-advocate and the adjutant-general, for confirmation or alteration.

Now, Crockett had committed a most serious military offence while on active service. He had, in military eyes, aggravated his offence by abandoning his post in the firing-line (good grounds for another capital charge, unpreferred). Supposing that all the sentries did what Crockett did? Might not the very war be over and lost? Might not Crockett's comrades have been surprised and slaughtered in their sleep of exhaustion?

I am putting the case at its worst, for at its best the setting does not apply.

Crockett might well have been mad, temporarily insane. In fact, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a man doing such a "mad" thing as did Crockett, well knowing the consequences if caught, and the odds against ultimate escape, had lost temporary control of himself.

Unfortunately for Crockett, front-line trenches are held by men in complete control of their actions—whether knowingly or automatically does not much matter—and are held only because the desire to escape death by running away, or deserting by stealth owing to fear, is outweighed by a knowledge of the consequences if a lapse occurs—death, or a fear of dishonouring the name, the regiment, or someone loved at home . . . a living death.

In actual fact, during a big battle, hundreds "straggle" into safety and are turned back by the military police at stragglers' posts; they are not shot or tried because it is not easy to shoot hundreds in cold blood. And in such circumstances, live men, even with "wind up," are more useful than dead comrades—for there is little justice when the blood is up and every shell is counted the last for someone. On the other hand, in a front-line emergency, when a break-through has occurred or a counter-attack has thrown a victorious firing-line into temporary chaos, a man may be shot by one of his own side to stem the tide and bring common sense,

reason, and reality into play, and panic to an end.

Of course, *theoretically*, it is wrong and indefensible to kill a comrade in such circumstances. But what is the alternative? Loss of the battle, of the position, or of the war.

The failure of our allies, the Portuguese, on April 9th, 1918, came near to losing much ground for us, and because of that I ordered the shooting, by machine-gun and rifle fire, of many Portuguese, in order to stem the tide. Had a complaint been lodged against me, and had I been tried for murder, would Sir Douglas Haig have ordered my execution?

If he had—provided the position had been held and the Channel ports had been saved—would it have mattered much to the army? In battle nothing else counts.

War and the military mind behind it are a strange contradiction of human terms and inhuman happenings.

But to return to the unhappy Crockett, sitting in his dug-out under guard, waiting to be told his fate. A slow business; a sad affair. Remember, cowardice is different to desertion; yet both are of equal demerit in military eyes. For a man to desert from the base at Boulogne, however, was not so deadly as was Crockett's conduct, for very obvious reasons. Technically, those at the base were soldiering in active service; but they were not fighting, essential though their service was to all of us.



During the Great War, when it fell to my lot to recommend the carrying out or the remitting of the death sentence, I invariably recommended the carrying out of the extreme penalty—because I expected to be shot myself if I ran away, or disgraced myself, which was a very easy thing to happen to one in time of war. And I invariably warned everybody connected with my command, whatever size it happened to be, that from me they might expect no mercy in matters relating to the safety of the line ; nor did I expect surrender at their hands to the enemy, or leniency from the British command, were I to fail or they to fail me. It was a perfect understanding—kept alive by the constant recitation of Kipling's "If," or an appreciation of that essential spirit.

So, to-day, long after, I write these words : Crockett died at our hands. Young Johnny Crockett died by order of Sir Douglas Haig, whose signature I saw on the proceedings read out on parade the day before sentence was carried out.

He was brave. He showed no malice. He was cheerful almost to the end—but not quite to the bitter end. I made him drunk, some hours before his execution, to ease his living misery.

The military police were so afraid that my men would mutiny and refuse to shoot, that they reported their fears to the A.P.M. I lectured them on morale and confined them to their billet

till the execution was over. The A.P.M. was also so "windy" that I had to threaten him with arrest if he did not keep his mouth shut and remain in his room until I told him he might come out after the execution, when he would require to send his telegram to G.H.Q. reporting the exact time of the execution and the fact that it had duly taken place.

There were other remarkable facts about the passing of Johnny Crockett. When everything was over I had to dictate the A.P.M.'s wire, otherwise he would not have known the precise time. I saw the execution; and the whole battalion heard it on parade, a wall screening the victim from the men's view. Death, despite all precautions, was not instantaneous. Owing to nerves, the firing-party fired wide. It was an event that had been anticipated.

Later, the Divisional Commander wrote congratulating the battalion on its "soldierly bearing in face of great strain." Execution cannot be carried out by a bad battalion lacking in morale.

Before Crockett took his first drink he had seen the Chaplain, written his letters, and made his peace with God. In the eyes of God, of course, he had committed no specific sin demanding repentance; therefore the Chaplain's task was easy. But in the eyes of the military authorities Crockett was an outcast.

To us, what was he? He was only poor

Crockett. And we never made up our minds for whom we were sorrier—him, or ourselves. For such is war.

It may be suggested that had I, as his commanding officer, recommended Crockett's reprieve, I might have saved his life. True, that is a point. But the merits of such a case depend on circumstances viewed from afar in a survey covering the whole army. . . . Was desertion rampant, or was it on the increase? Was any division worse than another? . . . These questions could alone be decided by one man, the supreme commander. And in my heart of hearts I felt that whatever I might say would make no difference, because, in the minds of a none-too-experienced military despotism—more particularly where the new armies were concerned—the idea was to teach the newly-raised army a lesson.

So Crockett died.

I did not regret his death at the time, nor even the circumstances surrounding it, for intuitively I felt that it would be the first and the last of its kind in my regiment. That prediction was proved true by fact.

About the same time as the Crockett case, I had to conduct the trial of an officer for cowardice and desertion. He was convicted. But he got off. He escaped Crockett's fate because of a legal quibble raised by influential friends. Perhaps the least said about this the better, except to remark that had justice been done according

to our code regrets would have been fewer than in the case of Crockett.

The treatment dealt out to officers and men for a lapse of duty affecting the safety of the army in the battle zone is technically the same. But in practice this is not so, because the failings to which senior officers are heirs, are human failings. It is hard to kill a friend in cold blood, even when the safety of the country is at stake. And most regular officers are friends or possess mutual friends.

During the whole war this affliction never tried me. If anything, I was inclined to take a more serious view of capital offences where officers were concerned, for the reason that the offenders were supposed to be setting an example. In one case I went through all the legal formalities relating to a colonel's offence with extreme care and meticulous observance because he was my friend, and because I hold the view that the sheltering of a friend is not permissible in war. There is nothing in all war to defend it.

Not long after the Crockett affair, another and rather similar incident happened in a neighbouring battalion. Two men, who were friends, were involved. But happily the Commander-in-Chief saw fit to commute the sentence to life imprisonment. I say happily—for no soldier, worth his salt, likes confirming the death sentence of a comrade.

I believe I am right in saying that only one officer was shot for cowardice by sentence of a

Court Martial in France ; although, of course, a good many were shot out of hand in order to stem the tide when running away.

Strictly from the military point of view I have no regrets for having killed a subaltern of British infantry on that same morning I ordered our machine-guns and rifles to be turned on the fleeing Portuguese. It happened on the Strazeel Road. It was a desperate emergency. I had to shoot him myself, along with a German who was running after him. My action *did* stem the tide ; and that is what we were there for.

Vividly, I still remember that scene. It might have been only yesterday. Never can I forget the agonized expression on that British youngster's face as he ran in terror, escaping from the ferocious Hun whose passions were a madness and who saw only red.

As I stood on the road, almost alone, after the incident, a car drove up. In it were a G.S.O.2 and a C.R.E. One of them shouted out to me. Was all well ? And he looked at the smoking revolver in my right hand.

Yes—all was well ! And I *laughed*.

Perhaps you, reader, would not have laughed.  
. . . All was well !

I do not believe, had you been in my shoes, that you would have known either what you might do next or what you might have done. It is even conceivable that you might have run away, too, and not known it. I nearly did.

What I did instead, meant to me—murder.

Oh, I know you will ask why I killed that British subaltern. The answer is more obvious than easy. My duty was to hold the line *at all costs*. To England, the cost was very little. To Colonel Blimp in his club and Mrs. Blimp in her boudoir *the cost was nothing*. To me? Even if the effort did mean murder, the line had to be held. . . .

There were other British soldiers there, the last of a remnant. Panic spreads so easily when the madness of a moment assails you. And a running man is a dangerous madness. Only, you don't stop to think once you've begun running.

There was a sequel to the incident not without its humour, when the battle had been won and the tension was over. A senior officer was reviewing certain honour lists which I had submitted to him.

"You know," he was heard to say, speaking of somebody who was not present, "I think that damned fellow should have a V.C., really; but I can't do that. His methods of holding the line were so questionable."

To which the obvious retort was ejaculated behind the cigarette smoke. . . . "But he *did* hold it!"

That, too, is war.

There was never any secrecy about executions. The names appeared in Field Force orders, with rank, offence, date, and exact time of execution to the minute. These details were read out to

regiments on parade, as part of the routine, so that there was no excuse for not knowing what was likely to happen if desertion were contemplated. In all probability Crockett's death was considered a sufficient deterrent for one division that winter.

The only men who "got away" with desertion to any extent during the war were those who hid in the cellars of towns near the line, and happened to be befriended by the inhabitants who were usually more sympathetic towards the men they saw going to and from the trenches than were those people living in comparative comfort and security in the areas at the rear and at the bases.

Hazebrouck was one of the towns where deserters were sheltered. When Hazebrouck eventually became a front-line zone, or nearly so, and the civil population and foodstuffs were evacuated, the deserters in hiding found themselves stranded in the cellars of the houses which had quickly been destroyed by gunfire. In their efforts to exist and to escape capture those unfortunate men turned bandit and looted and robbed the dumps at night for food. It was unsafe to venture through Hazebrouck alone at night, and unarmed, in 1918, even although the cellars were periodically combed.

One sergeant was shot dead by deserters in the railway station, where he had gone for loot or "scrounge" against orders. The town was out of bounds; and his death was attributed to

enemy action—not a difficult solution, when shells were falling by night and day.

The value of life is reduced, even at home, during a great modern war, in proportion to the duration of the warfare. But in France the English were less callous of life than were the French among civilians. The following story, by way of illustration, is by now an old chestnut. Probably it is smiled at and discredited ; but it is true and it happened while I was at Mailly-Mailly.

A British officer remarked quite casually to a French interpreter that he had an idea that an old farm-labourer who used to work in the fields close by was signalling to the enemy. His suspicions were due to the fact that at certain intervals after the departure of the old man from the farm our gun positions were shelled. The British officer intimated that he was going to keep a close watch.

Later, he met the French interpreter again ; he told him he must have been mistaken as the old man had departed, and although the gun positions had been constantly changed the enemy shelling continued on the new positions.

“ He won’t come back,” the interpreter said with a smile and a shrug.

“ Why not ? How do you know ? ”

“ Click ! ” And the interpreter made a noise with his mouth suggesting the release of a trigger while he wagged his trigger-finger in the air as if firing a rifle. “ He won’t come back ! ”



“ Good gracious,” exclaimed the British gunner. “ Why did you shoot him ? ”

“ You said so,” replied the Frenchman. “ You said you thought he was a spy.”

In war-time in France it was not necessary to be a spy to be shot. Merely to be suspected as a spy was sufficient.

### *Chapter 3*

#### THIS BUSINESS, BATTLE

A FEW weeks before Crockett's death, a man in another battalion of the same division committed a similar crime. Fortunately for him, however, he was captured in a billet behind the firing-line by the provost sergeant of his own battalion.

The battalion had been badly trained, badly disciplined. Its Colonel drank ; its officers, men of wealth and position, copied their Colonel. And the battalion was "run" by an upstart adjutant and a bullying sergeant-major. The entire outfit, from top to bottom, was wrong.

When the deserter was brought in the Colonel did not dare to put him back for trial. He was too afraid of the consequences, too ashamed. He washed out the charge. He neither said nor did anything of an acute disciplinary nature—a course of events only made possible because his own police had arrested the deserter. Not only was the Colonel ashamed to confess that his "fine" battalion contained a coward ; he was also afraid that, if put to the test, his men might possibly refuse to shoot their comrade. Actually, he scented mutiny.

It is erroneously believed by many that the safety of the British line depended on guns, guts, and sufficient ammunition. The safety of any particular part of the line at any particular moment, if the truth be known, depended on the presence or absence of two or three men who, in an emergency, were prepared to act often in complete violation of all decency, chivalry, and custom, in order that the line might be saved.

I always had in my battalion a man of this pattern. I had in my brigade seven of the type in 1917, to get hold of whom I had to keep casting "respectable" regular Colonels until I found what I wanted. The casting was severe ; the net was wide. It meant sending a dozen qualified regulars about their business, one after the other, just because they lacked that essential "It"—that mentality so necessary for safety in time of war. The particular mentality is not found on parade grounds or in barracks. It simply exists somewhere, everywhere, anywhere, unnoticed, dormant. History does not record it ; regular armies disown it—even if "It" did make most of the Generals of repute during the war. It is not and cannot ever be taught. One might as well begin to imagine the practising of an execution, in peace-time, on the barracks square, or the rehearsing of the shooting out of hand of a Divisional Commander with the wind up at an Aldershot Tattoo.

Such things could not be. But if more senior officers had been shot out of hand at the first

sign of panic, the line would have been the better held and the casualties among the rank and file would have been fewer.

The Trooping of the Colour is an immense moral stimulus. The Guards do it better and more frequently than others, and because of that, and because of the fact that their daily responsibilities concerning the safety of the Sovereign create the spirit of "Do or Die" within them, they fail less than others. Yet, even they have to do a bit of unrehearsed shooting out of hand on occasion.

Indeed, it is very doubtful if the most highly-trained, long-service troops in the world would stand up to modern war for long—let alone for four years—if the shadow of the death penalty did not always loom in the distance and the fear of the consequences of misbehaviour in face of the enemy was not constantly held in mind. Incidentally, if every General had made it his business to live with troops most of the time and become one of them, their jobs would have been less eagerly sought after, and there would have arisen "for the duration" that kind of command of formations which would have been irresistible, crude, selfless, sympathetic, and above all reliable.

Shooting out of hand is no pleasant task. But there are times when it is so terribly necessary, when, if it is not done, the public at home might read: "Another British Reverse." Of course, it cannot be expected that this shooting business

should be discussed in public—because battles are supposed to be won by valour, and not by murder. “God send a man strong enough to do the shooting,” is a war-time cry. But why the Almighty should be called upon to provide the missing link to hold the safety chain together is beyond definition. It is a strangely inconsistent demand to make. But war is just like that.

Not very long ago, in the peaceful surroundings of a country garden, I talked over the war days with my friend David Starrett, who had been with me as my personal helper every day of the war from the beginning to the end in France.

“You know,” he said, “in your war book you left out all about the sergeant-major on the First of July.”

“What sergeant-major?” I asked.

“Winter,” he said. And I asked him what this Winter had done.

“Do you remember,” he asked, “when Montgomery and Gaffikin were shouting for ammunition at the same time, and when C and D were calling for help; when the whole line was shaking like a bough in the wind and all the reserves were gone and your bombing officer had emptied his revolver into the mob rushing towards us during a bunk? Do you remember collecting the clerks and batmen and ordering me to take them to the sergeant-major with orders that he was to lead them up to the companies with bandoliers of ammunition?”

I had only a hazy recollection of these things.

"Do you remember me coming back to you and telling you that I couldn't get Winter to budge out of a trench, that he had the wind up. I asked you what I was to do?"

"What did I say?" I asked.

"'Shoot the —— And carry on!'"

I asked him if he did, and he replied: "Did I? I couldn't go shooting sergeant-majors! But I got him out of that funk-hole. . . . Said I, calling to big Kelly: 'Give me your rifle,' and he handed it to me and I opened and closed the breech. 'The Colonel says I'm to shoot you if you don't come out of that and take the men up with the ammunition,' I warned Winter, pointing the muzzle at him, with my finger on the trigger and the butt to my shoulder."

I laughed. "What did he do?"

"Oh, he came out all right," said Starrett triumphantly. "And we got the ammunition to the line, but he was near dead of fright the whole time and when we got there the Jerries burst through and if it hadn't been for agility and a handy trench you would have lost Starrett. . . . The last thing I remember was Gaffikin waving his revolver and shouting: 'I'll shoot the first man who moves!' Old Winter was out of the frying-pan into the fire—you telling me to shoot him at one end, and Gaffikin saying he'd do it at the other."

"Twenty years on makes a difference to one's

thoughts," I remarked. "Tell me, what do you think of it all now?"

"Sure it's the way to win battles. Isn't it the only way? Do you remember that windy General at Bourlon who nearly got us all scuppered? Didn't the men know all about that? Don't the men always know?"

"Do they?" I asked, wishing to draw him further, for this was a great anniversary, July 1st. A great day in both our lives.

He replied emphatically: "Certainly!" Then he added: "We had six Divisional Commanders. But could any hold a candle to Nugent?"

"Can you imagine Nugent shooting up his own men to save the line?" I inquired. The answer came like a shot.

"Why not? Why not? Didn't he know his job? Isn't it the only thing to do when the wind is up?"

And so I come to a crucial question in this war business, the answer to which the people at home want to know: Is it right for a man in authority, in the firing-line, who happens to have kept his head, to shoot his demented and panic-stricken comrades in order to restore the position?

Remember, a failure to do so may entail an appalling loss. If the line had not been held in at least three places by such desperate measures in April, 1918, the Germans might have captured the Channel ports.

It is probable that the man who successfully

holds the line, although far away in safety, reaps the reward. But supposing the recommendation for a reward were to read : “ He swaggered about and created great confidence when the line broke ; and by his presence of mind in shooting an officer, an N.C.O., and two privates of his battalion he restored the situation.”

Tell me, would that merit a D.S.O., or M.C. ?

Of course, if in the eyes of the Army Council these things simply do not happen, never have happened and never will happen, then there is nothing more to be said—except that they do not know about war ; they do not know anything about what they are talking !

General Nugent used to say that the 9th Royal Irish Rifles was worth its weight in gold to him because it could always be relied upon. In other words, that battalion, whenever they shot, shot to kill.

If it is a matter of comfort to a General, as it certainly is, to know that he can rely on certain troops and certain picked men in all circumstances, it is equally a matter of discomfort to a battalion commander not to be able to rely on battalions on his flanks, or in support or reserve, or on the Generals put over him.

Once I refused to go into the line with my battalion because I was supported by a unit I knew to be unreliable. It was badly disciplined, badly trained ; and it was commanded by a drunkard. I was willing to go in without



support and said so, but I was unwilling to go in with men against whom I should probably have had to turn my own machine-guns, and whose presence would have created the impression in the higher command that the line was more strongly held than actually was the case. I won my point. But the battalion was allowed to continue in its deplorable state until it was almost wiped out of existence by the combined fire of German and English troops : the former were trying to kill off as many of the enemy as they could—and the latter were trying to save the line by pinning the badly-trained and badly-led men down to their trenches by firing on them whenever they tried to retreat over the top.

A staff officer of mine, long after the war was over, told me during a friendly discussion, that he disliked the way I handled and treated the divisional staff above me ; that on occasions I did not tell them things until those things were done. This was true. But it was unavoidable for the reasons illustrated above. The alternative was to be prepared to court disaster in order to conform to custom and routine.

It is difficult for a soldier who is always prepared to do his own shooting in moments of emergency, to see eye to eye with people who are amateurs at the job, or who like to treat this business of war as a conventional competition dependent on rules of precedent and etiquette. War is not a game for gentility.

Figuratively speaking, General Nugent—a soldier after my own heart, with the stamp of the 60th Rifles on him—did his own shooting so well (in the front line with weapons, on paper with such an acid pen, in the conference room with such a cutting tongue and subtle wit) that he was sent to India at a critical period when he should have been promoted to command an army corps. But men were not wanted who knew more about the job in hand than the staffs and certain of the chiefs who ran the war almost on the rocks because they did not know how to do their own shooting and objected to the presence of those who did.

To say this is not to advocate strife between staffs or individuals on staffs. It is to emphasize the point that it almost invariably happens that the soldier who knows his job and knows how and when to say “No” when the simple answer would be “Yes,” is at a disadvantage among courtiers and “office men,” and usually is shelved to the disadvantage of the State when a victim is required.

After the battle of the Somme, General Nugent sent for me and asked in confidence why certain battalions had done so well and others so badly, why —th had stuck their ground and why —th had retired. I said it was a matter of shooting. He did not understand—or, he pretended not to.

I told him. “A stiff upper lip, a complete understanding. Retire and you’re shot by me !

Stick it out and you may survive !” To which he replied : “ They did that at Wepener.”<sup>1</sup>

Only a very few of the Ulster Division reached the final objective at Thiepval. Those who got there and reached C line and stayed there, did so because they had been trained to the idea that it is better to stay on and perhaps survive, than to fall victim to the Colonel’s gun on the way back. Pride and valour had little to do with it.

An amazing number of objectives were not taken during the war. Three-quarters, at least, of these might have been taken had the attack been “ pushed home.” Men will not, as a rule, risk their lives unnecessarily unless they know that they will be shot down by their own officers if they fail to do or if they waver.

I, who am a soldier, know it is difficult to leave the shelter of a shell-hole for a final rush in the face of a deadly shower of bullets and the certain knowledge that cold steel awaits. It is less difficult, however, if there is the knowledge that a loaded revolver for use against the enemy is also loaded for use against you if you fail to jump forward when the barrage lifts.

The regiment priding itself on always getting its objectives or holding its positions, is actually admitting the presence of that revolver.

Those remarks particularly apply to the new armies of the Great War, and not so much to units which had been trained for years in time of peace and had the advantage of entering into

<sup>1</sup> A siege of the South African War, successfully sustained by Colonial troops.

a campaign with a good deal of morale instilled into them. But three months after the war had begun the old order of things had ceased to exist.

I remember an officer of birth and breeding of the special reserve—a captain, with experience at Gallipoli, it was said—who joined with a reinforcing draft after the Somme battle. By his talk and bearing I imagined him an efficient officer, but being always suspicious of the talking soldier I took the precaution of placing him under test as second-in-command of a company, under a most capable temporary captain of the new armies.

He objected. It was as well. For he turned out to be useless and afraid.

“What did you do exactly at Gallipoli?” I asked him one day, after finding him crawling on his stomach, in daylight well behind the lines, on his way up to his company, in an effort to avoid imaginary danger caused by the cracking of overhead, indirect rifle-fire. The firing had got on his nerves.

“I was on the staff,” he replied. And it then transpired that he had got no farther than one of the islands and was, in effect, a “bottle-washer.” I mentioned this fact to his captain, who told me chaffingly that he had made up his mind to get the fellow bumped off in a scrap in No-Man’s-Land.

“Better not,” I warned him, remembering that many a joke is an earnest jest, for it was Montgomery who was speaking—Montgomery

who had well-earned the D.S.O., and who, it was whispered, had found it necessary to slay many of his side in order to restore reason and confidence which sudden panic had banished from the ranks of a reinforcing regiment from Yorkshire. As the officer in question did not belong to us and was a very bad example to the men, I told Montgomery that I would send him away.

Now, this man should have been glad of the opportunity, as every hour of his existence in the line must have been a fearful torment to him. But he protested and asked to see the General. To his request I could not accede, for the simple reason that I had not the time to waste on formalities and I knew I was right in removing an unsuitable man from the sphere of battle. However, I told him that if he cared to stay one more night I would send him out on patrol to test him.

That was sufficient ! He turned deathly white and fell fainting to the ground. He had to be moved on a stretcher to a first-aid centre, where he recovered sufficiently to be evacuated to England. He spent many happy months in hospital, and, during convalescence, at the home of a lady of title, recounting his exploits and deeds of daring to innumerable, extremely pretty V.A.D. nurses.

His escape from "Montey" was providential, because, "as sure as eggs is eggs," had he stayed on a little longer and boasted a little louder he would have found a job from which there would

have been no escape, and I would probably have known no more about the incident than could be explained in the briefest of messages in the routine morning situation report.

To keep a check on bullying and yet to leave free scope for public school-like discipline, was an important feature of the everyday work of the infantry colonel. While it was understandable and often necessary to wink at terrible deeds of desperation in defence of the line, it was equally necessary to realize that such deeds, permissible in circumstances of emotion, and countenanced as an unholy emergency, were likely to be repeated in circumstances quite unjustifiable.

Now, it was my habit to order samples of German wire to be cut and brought back by officers on patrol. A dual purpose was thus served—one would know that the German *had* been visited, and one would also get to know any new type of wire being used. It was easy to tell the difference between English and German wire, or to realize when French wire was in use. Of course, as all ultimate movements depend on honest reports, the rendering of a false patrol report was not only dangerous to troops but was deserving of the severest punishment if found out.

It came to my notice once, due to a coil of rusty wire being discovered in a dug-out, that a captain was a sadist, gratifying his cruel desires by making his subalterns sit on spikes of rusty barbed wire until they bled and permitting them to supply him with free drinks. A dangerous

patrol was avoided, as a reward, by simply cutting small pices of wire from the coil in the dug-out and sending them to me. I became suspicious when one of this man's subalterns became a casualty and was evacuated suffering from blood-poisoning as the result of a festering wound. The astounding thing was that these men allowed themselves to be tortured by such a brute in order to escape perilous work. If such a thing had happened in a colonial corps someone would probably have tied up the perverted creature and thrown him over the parapet to be shot by an enemy sniper.

What did I do with him? No—I did *not* shoot him. Nor did I waste my time and the time of others by trying to court martial him. I recognized that he was deficient in intellect; he was evacuated under observation as a suspected madman. Later he found himself in England, as the medical authorities did not like insane people and passed them on from one to the other like red-hot cinders. Years afterwards I recognized the sadist standing on his head for the pennies of a London theatre queue.

Not so fortunate, however, was the bullying N.C.O. who was blown to pieces by a bomb, with the pin extracted, being placed between his shirt and trousers. Some person, or persons, who had suffered ill-treatment at his hands, had watched for the opportunity and had taken their terrible revenge. When I mentioned this case some years ago in a book, jeers and indignation

were levelled at me. Why? Because in those days to suggest that the ways of war were based on the abnormal was to invite the condemnation of the ignorant and the ill-informed. In their eyes, such things simply "were not done." How many have been disillusioned bitterly since then?

I quote these different cases to demonstrate the fact that most front-line soldiers know only too well that the chances of life or the possibilities of death do not alone depend on the activities of the enemy in the battle zone. Is general ignorance of this fact to be surprised at when comparatively few people beyond the privates ever occupied that zone as it shifted with the ebb and flow of battle? Generals, when they did go to the trenches, usually fussed in and rushed out in a tip-and-run manner, and staff officers seldom did much more than copy their commanders. As a rule the details of front-line life remained a closed book to all except the regular tenants of the localities where death reigned.

War correspondents and war novelists, as a rule and wisely, kept clear of the actual line; propagandists were not allowed to go there. So who else were left?

When a divisional history of the war was being written some years ago by a soldier with years of experience and a certain amount of so-called war service, the author asked me to supply a portion of a chapter describing trench life and trench warfare, which he was unable to do himself



despite his several years in France. I gave him some notes. But they were not at first made use of, because he could not imagine, until convinced by others, that a front-line system of trenches could have been just as I described it !

The fact that Crockett could have been made drunk on purpose before being executed by the firing-squad was similarly beyond the belief of an army commander well known to me. And a former Assistant Adjutant-General of the British Expeditionary Force, upon reading what I had said, scathingly denounced my account in a weekly journal, because he was unable to visualize the military police being over-ridden by an infantry commanding officer, or himself departing from precedent. That same officer might, for all I know, believe that chaplains never fired a rifle at the enemy because they were not supposed to. But—who knows ?

I have always had very definite views as to what army chaplains should and should not do in peace or in war. I acknowledge with gratitude having received a vast amount of encouragement and help from certain chaplains during the war. I have also to admit the opposite sentiment.

The most unpleasant military duty ever performed by me—the shooting of young Crockett—was made less difficult to support by the help given me by Chaplain Quinn, who had been associated with my battalion since its inception as well as with the parish from which most of the men in my battalion had been drawn for years.

I did not consult him as to whether I should give Crockett the chance of getting drunk—I had no drugs—because that would have placed an unfair responsibility on him while shirking my own responsibility. And I did not tell him. But we did agree that the chaplain's attendance on Crockett should not be unduly prolonged and that by a certain hour at night his task should end . . . and end it did.

In times of difficulty and times of relaxation I received help and advice from countless chaplains of all denominations. By their courage and truthfulness they kept me wise as to the inner needs of the men and how their load might be lightened a little. No greater help could I have had than from Quinn, the Protestant, of the Church of Ireland, and Shine, the Roman Catholic, from Cork, who was later killed and who had a good seat on a horse and frequently exercised my horses for me when I was tied down to the line.

But, there were others. . . .

The arguments about the precise duties to be performed by Anglicans, Nonconformists, and Roman Catholics at the joint consecration of colours (I possessed a Roman Catholic battalion at the time), and how far they could stand from each other and what they would say after each other, would have annoyed me beyond words had I not seen the humour of the situation. I settled the matter by knocking their heads together over a good lunch and a glass of

wine while threatening to consecrate the colours myself if they did not agree to work with me and accept a very reasonable programme.

What I would not tolerate was chaplains overstepping the mark or infringing on what might be called the "prerogatives" of the combatant—killing, swearing, loose-living. But there was very little of that where chaplains were concerned.

On one unforgettable occasion I came upon a Welsh Nonconformist chaplain indulging in rapid fire from a shell-hole at fleeting enemy targets. It was almost at the end of the war, when we were practically in open warfare in circumstances which called for no emergency. Now, it is possible that, if surrounded in an isolated post with others, and vigorously and closely attacked, some chaplains might consider themselves morally justified in using the weapon of a dead or wounded man so as to strengthen the defence. That, to me, would be a matter for individual decision. Personally, I think that the non-combatant chaplains, unarmed and unafraid, disapproving of the whole performance yet willing to run every risk in the performance of their Christian duties as missionaries, fulfil the priestly obligations which Jesus Himself would have fulfilled and which He would have liked His disciples to perform.

But this Welsh chaplain was doing "for fun" what most of us were heartily sick of doing in grim necessity. I simply took the rifle away

from him, unloaded it, handed it to the sergeant, and asked the chaplain to lunch with me. In privacy we had it out. And I came to the conclusion that the man should never have been a clergyman at all. I was driven to tell him so.

There is a sequel. He renounced his vocation and joined up as a private. He did quite well, and I was told that he had the finest flow of language in the regiment, which, being Welsh, was saying a good deal.

The Welshman had a good vocabulary, although bad language from a parson jars. One Welsh minister was indulging in a fearful flow when I surprised him round a corner. He had not seen me coming, and the flow continued in spate until I pulled him up. "Hi!" I said; "you're poaching! I'm the only fellow allowed to run amok here. You look after your job and I'll look after mine."

He was very upset. Shortly afterwards he came to see me and explained that he did not mean what he had said, that he been carried away, and that he did not even remember what he had said. It is just as well—he was young and might have been terribly embarrassed with the thought. Actually, he had consigned some of us to perdition several times because leave had been stopped!

No, I did not shoot the man! There is no joke in shooting to kill. The British soldier with his back to the wall is the bravest on earth, whether he is being shot by his comrades, by order, on

account of some misfortune or temporary lapse, or attacked when behind reasonable cover by some enemy. Men will hold out, and do hold out, in isolated posts, to the bitter end—till all are dead or wounded. But when once put on the run—by surprise or weight of metal or numbers—panic will at times overtake the very best, particularly when isolated and only partly trained and raw.

It is then that the situation can only be saved by a well-aimed shot. You see, *the line must be held at all costs.*

## *Chapter 4*

### FOUR BATTLES

I KNOW that very many people at home never dream of the truth behind "Another Big Victory," the smaller human dramas played in the shadow of the mighty triumph and tragedy of battle-winning by national armies.

Let me recall here some of the incidents relating to four battles of the Great War in which new armies were involved, and we shall see if absent people have been told the truth about the details which go to make the whole.

I will take four new army battles in which I led new army troops which I had trained, because the battles of 1914, hardly recognizable as battles two years later, have no comparison with the exposures to which the immature volunteers of the new armies were submitted from July 1st, 1916, onwards. Those four battles were the Somme (July 1st to 3rd, at Thiepval), 1916; Cambrai (November 23rd to 25th, at Bourslon), 1917; the Somme (March 21st to 25th, around Ervillers), 1918; and the Lys (April 9th to 15th, around Strazeel), 1918. I want to show how in these battles, the ebb and flow of the tide cor-

responded to the state of mind of the immediate commanders.

The description "Thiepval" applied to that tiny portion of the great Somme battle where the men of Ulster did so well, is not correct ; but it is maintained in order to reduce confusion. So far as the Ulster Division was concerned there never was a battle of Thiepval. For that Division did not attack the village of that name, but emerged from Thiepval wood towards the Schwaben Redoubt (which was captured in fine style) before reaching the final objective near Grandcourt. For these reasons, the battle honour "Thiepval" was not allowed when the application was made in 1922.

The Ulstermen lost the results of the capture because of the impossibility of accomplishing the task allotted to them. Yet, to their undying fame, they almost achieved a miracle by doing what they did do with both flanks exposed and eventually "in the air."

The final objective was actually reached by a few men of my battalion, whose valour proved in the end to be a waste of life because when more men could have rushed the final objective (not that they could have held out alone) they were prevented from so doing by our own barrage which was timed not to lift until ten minutes after the men were ready to spring for the final rush. In other words, they were mown down in the open because the battle was being run by people far away and out of the fight,

people who were never in the fight and who were conforming to a set of rules.

There can be no fixed rules during a dog-fight, and no precedental formula. I was at my battle head-quarters at the time, but had I been at the final objective I could have done nothing to assist the advance, frustrated as it was by our own barrage.

There are times, in attack and defence, when local leaders can alter the situation by a display of firmness, even to the point of using the revolver on their own men. None realized this, prior to July 1st, more than Colonel Bernard of the Indian Army—as gallant and chivalrous a man as ever lived.

Bernard was much older than I was ; we usually operated together, he with his battalion, I with mine. Before that first day of July, 1916, after we had received our detailed orders and rehearsed the attack over and over again on spit-rocked trenches, Bernard came to see me. He was not satisfied. Commanding officers had received positive orders that they were not to accompany their units in the advance or even deploy them in No-Man's-Land. Instead, they were to take to their dug-outs so as to be "safe." The whole idea was repulsive. It cut right across the foundations of mutual trust, emphasized in training, between private soldier and officer. We agreed to protest, but it was of no avail. The "indecent" order had come from high up in the hierarchy—and well back. The rule of



clerks was being employed where the rule of the jungle should have prevailed.

So, Bernard and I agreed in private to disobey. And it was as well that we did.

Our plan was to meet in No-Man's-Land, if alive. There we would supervise the deployment and make any necessary alterations in the plan over which we had had little control. He felt that the battle would be lost throughout the miles-long battle-front because of the hour at which the attack was timed to start. (Colonel Bernard always favoured the cover of darkness for our attacks.) If either of us became casualties during the preliminary advance through Thiepval wood to the place of deployment, which was an exposed position dominated by Thiepval village on the right and the Beaumont-Hammel Ridge on the left, we agreed that the survivor should carry on and deploy both battalions. If both of us were knocked out it was arranged that our seconds-in-command, who were supposed to be left out, should carry on.

As had been surmised by us, neither the fortified Thiepval, nor the strongly fortified Beaumont-Hammel, fell. Colonel Bernard was killed at the head of his battalion, by trench-mortar fire from the village which also almost wiped out his two leading companies following behind him in columns of four. That plan was the plan of the higher hierarchy—not of the fighting front.

Observing what was happening to Bernard five

hundred yards away on my right, I was driven to alter, by word of mouth above the din, the mode of my deployment. The deployment was accomplished—but, of course, had I been obeying orders in my dug-out no such alteration could have been ordered. The four company-commanders would have thought and acted in four different ways.

The alteration meant that instead of losing everybody in the first five minutes, we lost only about fifty men. The men waited under cover of a sunken road while I went off to the right to take Bernard's place and do what I could to rally his battalion.

There I found chaos. The remnants of his battalion, as he lay dead in his chosen place at the head of his men, had gone to ground in desperation, and my men could not well move forward with their right unguarded and the ground beyond Thiepval still held.

Withdrawing my revolver from its holster, I called upon Bernard's remnants to follow me to the front line, a distance of about three hundred yards.

Not a man moved.

I told them I would shoot.

"What would Bernard say to that?" I asked.

The words worked wonders—with the aid of the ready revolver.

The moral appeal is generally stronger than the armed threat . . . if there is time. But there seldom is time; and there never is time if

a sudden assault has come from the enemy. In this case, the individual enemy no longer existed in very close proximity. Only his severe fire was holding us up. Of course, had I been unarmed and had told those men to go forward I very much doubt if any notice would have been taken of me.

The disobeying of an order, at the wise suggestion of Colonel Bernard, who paid for it with his life, surmounted by the fact that his men "got there" (his adjutant received the D.S.O., a fact that would have pleased him more than anything anybody could have ever given him) enabled the Ulster Division justly to claim that it had carried all before it and fulfilled its task. My battalion and Bernard's had been given the task of leap-frogging the remainder of the division and carrying on to the final objective. They got there.

The true story could not be written, at the time, in the reports and war diaries, for the simple reason that despite the obvious desirability of officers being permitted to break orders in certain circumstances, and despite the absurdity of an army commander being able to dictate to a battalion commander his conduct during battle, if we had told the whole truth we might all have got into trouble.

My brigade commander—a good man and fine soldier—quietly backed me up, and I speedily got a brigade for doing what Bernard considered the right thing to do. But when it was suggested

that a certain officer should be recommended for the V.C., and the reply from far above was that he should consider himself lucky not to be tried by court martial for disobeying orders, we began to think it safer to let sleeping dogs lie after battle, or in other words—continue lying.

It was at this battle that for the first time I, or anybody else, had seen a hastily trained volunteer national army in action. I had trained the battalion personally in almost every detail from the very first day of its existence, nearly two years before, when it was only a mob in mufti. . . . And much depended on the results. Our handling of all new army troops from July 4th, 1916, to the end of the war (during which time eleven battalions passed my hands, ten in one brigade) was based on our experience of raising and training volunteer battalions of the new army since 1914; of getting the men quickly “shot over” and gradually introducing them to the bigger business. In fact, as in the case of young game dogs, they were “shot over” first with care and caution.

My battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles never needed a threat, revolver or otherwise, to carry them on to the objective or to stick it out. They knew one thing—and knew it well—that if they failed to go forward or to stand fast, shooting would begin, shooting by some officer who, knowing the game, knew how to play it.

On the night of July 1st, when the line broke at the Schwaben Redoubt and men in the dark,

mixed up with other units of the division and units of a reinforcing division, were hurled back in a rabble, clothes in tatters, rifles discarded or left lying on the ground, there was some shooting. But that was too late as the avalanche was overwhelming. Captain Montgomery told me later how, in desperation, he fired his revolver into a crowd of British soldiers on the run, hoping to stop them without having an idea who they were or to which units they belonged.

I took over a brigade of Welshmen, in October, 1916, who were made of the right stuff; a year later they proved to the world at Bourlon Wood their ability to carry all before them when properly led by their officers. At the time I took them over, however, their training, *morale*, and discipline were a disgrace to the British Army, despite the fact that the brigade had been in existence in England for nearly two years and in France for three months.

What is the explanation?

The brigade had had two or three brigadiers—all regulars—and a guardsman brigade-major from its inception. In October, 1916, it was a sorry show, with one bright exception; one battalion had a fairly good idea of what soldiering should be like because its Colonel (a special reserve officer) had a fair idea of military matters. The truth is that the average regular officer—trained on narrow lines, with a limited outlook, many prejudices, and complete absence of knowledge of things outside the barrack square, the

club, the mess, the playing field or the boudoir, and entirely unaccustomed to the rough and tumble of life—is lost when called upon to perform work which is normally outside his sphere and is never catered for in peace-time. The raising of a new battalion of volunteers and the training of the officers at the same time as the rank and file, demanded qualities not frequently found in England in the army. It is a miracle that the new armies were raised at all. Due to the lack of experience of the regular officers in training quickly and thoroughly, the units, instead of being like Colonel Bernard's battalion, were mostly on a par with the worst battalion of a famous corps which failed to take Bourlon village in its first real fight after three years of training.

When Sir Henry Wilson said : “ Kitchener's ridiculous and preposterous army of twenty-five corps is the laughing stock of every soldier in Europe,” he was not merely exhibiting his own military shortcomings, which were numerous, and confessing that Lord Kitchener knew more about life and men than did he ; he was stating the fact—which I found out in 1916, and which Bernard knew—that, given a hair's breadth of divergence from the ordinary, and left without his well-trained and experienced warrant—and non-commissioned officers, the ordinary average British officer is lost.

In 1914 the average British officer surpassed himself in valour in the regiments and died, as of

old, against heavy odds with a smile on his lips. But in 1915 and onwards he proved himself, on the whole, an all round idiot, still ready to die like a hero but absolutely unable to raise and train troops quickly and keep on doing it, or to lead what he had raised or trained against the enemy to the enemy's discomfiture. As the seniors were of precisely the same stuff as the juniors, the result was a devastating demonstration of military inefficiency.

Plumer was probably the best of a bad bunch : but they were all branded with the same mark— incompetence and self-satisfaction. Haig, in latter days, thought that the mantle of the Almighty had fallen on him in order that he might win the war of God against the barbarians. He thought Ben Tillett was an anarchist ! Horne could seldom do anything save touch his hat ! Rawlinson was a circus clown ! Robertson was a good troop sergeant-major.

Who are left ? Allenby, Munro, Gough, Smith-Dorrien— all of them A 1.

But what of Wilson ? We must not forget him. He was the complete military " chancer " of our time, bad in every way. In other places and in other ways, in wars of the back bush or in wars of revolt, where men lead and play with life and death as Haig and Plumer and the others used to play bridge and polo for fun, the lives of the majority of army corps, divisional, and brigade-commanders of the Great War, in addition to the lives of the two commanders-in-chief, French and

Haig, would not have been worth a day's pay. They would have been got rid of in other ways ; they would have been shot by their own men, because war is rough and the threat of disaster leads to desperation.

That is why the Australian Monash, a fine man and a good soldier, a civilian by profession and a soldier at birth, could have commanded the armies of the Empire in France with success. And more—he would have staffed the whole army with suitable men, chosen for battle and not for bridge. Monash could no more afford to have bad or unsuitable officers in his Australian corps—particularly in the higher commands—than I could afford to have bad officers in my battalion, brigade, or division. I was prepared to shoot or kill in order to have and to hold, without regard for sentiment or uniform. And so was Monash. I was prepared to sack the useless to make room for the useful. So was Monash and so were most colonials. I am not a colonial, but I know colonial soldiers and colonial soldiering all over the world. It is great and of splendid value. This fact is as important to-day as it was during the war.

Bourlon Wood was taken by my Welshmen in 1917, and held for days against endless counter-attacks, because they were properly trained and properly led and had been made to understand by their colonels and by me that there was no excuse for failure, that it was better to die at the hands of the enemy than to be shot out of hand



like rats by their own officers. Bourlon Wood was captured and held because of that, but Bourlon village was not captured—because Colonels Plunkett, Benzie, Andrews, and Kennedy who captured the wood could not be in two places at once, and nobody had the gumption to provide men to lead men. It is possible to teach men how to die without actually killing them, but it is not possible to capture positions without teaching men that it is better to risk death in order to achieve victory than to run the risk of being shot for failing to take that risk.

In the action at Bourlon, which was part of the battle of Cambrai, comparatively few men at the apex of the salient, from which there was no escape save by way of its base, had equal chances. All were the same kind of men drawn from England, Scotland, and Wales. Those on the right claimed victory and glory—those on the left defeat and degradation. The victorious had learned how to die. The defeated had not ; they had not been taught.

Who are those who really should have been shot ? Who in the War of American Independence should have been shot ? The men or their leaders ?

And yet divisional—corps—army—and G.H.Q.—commanders and staffs unblushingly dare to lay down the law to-day about what they will do in “ the next war ”—as if they had done well in the last !

When will the people learn that the German

Army was never beaten ; that the war drew to its close only because the German population was starving slowly to death ?

I would warn the people at home that the staff officers and men who failed to see that point during the Great War and who were not up to the colonial standard at shooting to kill, are to-day in control and are giving advice on how to "defend" England. I would also warn them that the Lewis gun was rejected by the War Office before the war, as worthless, and that the chief engineer of the army in France ridiculed the idea of tanks in 1915 ! To-day, the men in command, brought up and educated on war failure during the Great War, are telling us that the gas-mask is perfect against all gasses and that a partially mechanized army, plus a new fleet, plus greatly enhanced air efficiency, will save England in her hour of trial. Have I any more justification for trusting them now than I had for trusting their seniors during the Great War, for trusting that my flanks were secure, my reserves efficient, and my supports effective ? *No !*

Let us pass to the next ordeal by fire—the Somme, 1918. Compare it with the others, with Thiepval and Bourlon. The three battles were totally different. At Thiepval, the grand offensive (part of the first battle, and lost by two minutes), was fought on a huge front. Bourlon, also an offensive, was fought at the point of a triangle. At Ervillers and thereabouts, part of the Somme, 1918, the grand German offensive

was fought on a front wider than was the Somme, 1916.

Was there a common factor ?

There were four. The higher command, as in 1916, failed in its task, failed to support Sir Hubert Gough, by permitting him, by making him, take over ground from the French when he had not the troops to hold it. In 1916 it failed the whole army by kow-towing to the French and forcing a bad plan of attack down the throat of Rawlinson. It failed to provide well-trained and well-led troops to withstand the attack. It told the usual lies after the battle. Half the fight was won, half lost, by half-hearted measures.

Are the people still justified in believing the same kind of mentality which says that our army, navy, and air force defence, is, on principle, still sound ? It was proved to have been far from sound during the war.

In petty detail, in our portion of the Ervillers action, the result was much as it was at Bourlon, although some of my units were new to me. It was a defensive battle turned into an offensive battle. All three battalions did well (two particularly well), but the fire of the old "shoot to kill" brigade had dwindled—and the dead bodies left behind at Bourlon, the wounded in hospitals, told their sorry tale. However, it was not so bad. It merely took more pressure from the Colonels, Brown and Metcalfe, and myself, to get things done. Indeed, I had to tell one senior officer over the telephone that if he could not see

his way to carry out an attack instantly he not only would rue the day but might not live to see another.

He was new to me. My tactics worked.

It is very bad when objectives are not taken ; usually the fault is with the Colonel, who is not prepared to push on because he has not taught his men or come to an understanding with them. In this case, the men of another formation were definitely not led, with the result that they failed to leave their trenches when grim necessity demanded, and they failed to stay in their trenches when it was obvious that that was the only thing to do.

Just as I had an understanding with my men regarding battle behaviour, so the colonial privates—the Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and South Africans had an understanding with their officers as to how they, the officers, should lead them. In all cases default meant death.

Battle is hard, is grim. I know of no way of softening it. But it can be avoided !

Of course, this “ shoot to kill ” practice cannot be applied to badly-trained, badly-disciplined or badly-moralled troops ; neither can it be attempted by men tied down to Old Country military convention or barrack-square worship. For if badly found troops “ bolt ” they “ bolt ” ; they know of no other way out. But if well-trained soldiers, temporarily at a disadvantage, with heads lost and minds unsteady, are sud-

denly pulled up by a threat, a shout or a shot from one of their own side . . . they usually pull themselves together.

There were divisional-commanders during the war who positively revelled in being surrounded by duds, and who consequently caused a lot of trouble to their more keenly disposed subordinates.

When fire-arms were first used, the opposing knights in armour jeered at the musketeers firing from a distance and accused them of cowardice, of taking a mean advantage and not daring to come to close quarters ! Yet, in 1918, I met a general who would not permit his machine-guns to fire at direct targets because he said they might be hit in retaliation and so preferred firing at indirect and unseen targets into the blue ! There is no accounting for tastes when reason is absent.

During the latter part of the South African War, I was serving with a regular battalion which was never permitted to go into action because of the incompetence of its Colonel, who received the C.B. for war service. Also, a subaltern of the South African days who served under the same Colonel and got a thoroughly-deserved D.S.O., was never given a brigade during the Great War, but was banished back to Africa because he knew too much and was apt to make his seniors look silly when he spoke his mind at conferences.

The man who shines at war is usually at a loss

in times of peace, particularly in the regular army. If the Army Council were wise they would keep a list of men capable of winning their wars for them in war-time ; the colonies and certain branches of big business could provide the necessary men of courage and personality, unfettered by favouritism and convention.

After the Ervillers fight, having in mind the Bourlon battle, I came to the conclusion that our particular task was to be to help lame ducks over stiles, carry crocks on our shoulders, and generally endeavour to pull the dud chestnuts out of the fire when the temperature became too hot for the conventionally-minded.

It was not a bad part to have to play, if left alone to play it in the way we knew and others did not know. But it is not possible to pull hot chestnuts off the embers unless the hands are hard and the tricks are known. In battle, hard hands mean competent Colonels, and because my superiors thrived on incompetent Colonels they hated me when I cast out my incompetents ; and at times they refused to let me do so. This again was a silly conventional attitude to adopt, because it was obvious that if we all kept duds we should all fall down, whereas, if I selected good stock to work with, some of us might stand up. Thus it was that we are landed in our fourth battle, hampered by duds, sustained by a few stalwarts, without our own magnificent artillery.

It was a spot which was supposed to be quiet

and suitable for repose. The British Army had been reposing there so long that most of the trenches were decaying and falling in.

The setting of the battle of the Lys was quite unlike the other three battles. For instance, "they" knew it was coming, yet they did not move quickly to remedy the defects. I was not told to be prepared, nor was I put on my guard in any way, but it took me only a few hours after occupying my line on the night of April 7th/8th, 1918, and sending patrols to wander down the German communication trenches, to realize that we were in for trouble.

The silence was uncanny. I had guessed that the Germans were massing in front of the Portuguese on my right. I visited the Portuguese on the night of 7th/8th and 8th/9th and found them *all* asleep, bootless, minus equipment, with dirty cartridge cases and rifles, jammed Lewis-guns, insufficient wire, and filth surrounding them.

I reported these things to higher authority and sent for a Portuguese commander, only to be informed, quite openly, that he was suffering from venereal disease and could not come over to see me. I then asked for our reserve brigade to be put into the Portuguese line at once, in daylight on April 8th, and I warned all my men. Then I hoped for the best.

But the reserve brigade was not told to move. It was merely warned to be ready to defend on

my right flank. The misfortunes of April 9th were largely attributed to the fact that our reserve brigade did not get into position quickly ; and all our guns were consequently lost while we were saved from complete disaster by the gallantry of the Welch and Middlesex regiments under Colonels Brown and Metcalfe.

So far as we are now concerned, the chief item emanating from the Lys battle was the disappearance of a whole battalion into Germany as prisoners, "for the duration," without firing a shot, and the disappearance of a whole brigade staff from the battle-field, to safety behind the lines, for the duration of the battle.

In both cases the leaders should certainly have been shot. They would have been had I had anything to do with them. I realize that it is foolish to carry out the extreme penalty when the danger is over, the war ended, and prisoners returned ; but had I been present when the "surrender" took place I should most probably have shot in my anger the chief officers concerned, as well as accounting for as many Germans as possible.

In the case of the wholesale flight of the staff it is difficult to understand how any of its members—particularly the seniors—escaped the firing squad.

It is interesting to examine how it came about that a whole battalion should be taken prisoner in one corner of the battle-field, while in another the same kind of men should put up a most



heroic defence against heavy odds and get away with it.

The answer is—Colonels.

It is amazing that G.H.Q., dependent on the fighting valour of a few to win the war for the whole, should constantly have obstructed the efforts of the few seniors who had some idea as to how battles should be fought and won. They would not send us competent commanders, nor would they facilitate the removal of the incompetents, because their own ideas were based on incompetence. Our immediate difficulties and disasters were due to the incompetence of the higher commands before the battle, and their neglect, when warned of impending disaster, to make timely and proper arrangements to meet it at all costs. They were also due to the slowness of a brigade on the right and the cowardice of a battalion commander on the left, who surrendered his regiment without firing a shot because he was attacked in the rear instead of in the anticipated front and his person was thereby endangered !

And so I come to the affair on the Strazeel road, which I have already mentioned, when I found myself, thanks to reasons detailed above, in shirt sleeves, killing Germans and my own men to stem both tides. I had escaped across the River Lys by the skin of my teeth and lost two of the best and most valuable members of my staff just before the bridge fell. What else could I do but shoot ?

Verily, there was a great deal of shooting that day. And, as is usual, those who really deserved it escaped scot-free. Yet Sir Hubert Gough was relieved of his command for the faults of Haig and the system.

## *Chapter 5*

### SNIPING AND SLAUGHTER

EARLY in the war we became aware that the Germans knew as much about the use and effect of sniping as did the Afrides on the North-West Frontier and the Boers in South Africa. Good sniping cramps the style of the opponent. It makes him go slowly. If directed against roads and paths it often accounts for casualties in the senior ranks. In Africa and India the sniping was done in circumstances easier than in France, because in the French zone there was less space between the opponents, with the result that snipers had to be artificially concealed so as to avoid detection.

To me, the organization of the sniping system became easy on my front as I had done a considerable amount of deer-stalking in Scotland as well as big game-shooting in Africa. The sniper is, in effect, the stalker turned man-killer. It is simply a difference of target. I used my own sporting rifles, telescopic sights, and telescopes—handled by a few deer-stalkers from Scotland—against the enemy, reinforced by the artifice of an artist who painted trees and bushes and the like on canvas. From behind this camouflage skilful

snipers shot, and an erstwhile wild fowler learned to adapt his craft to the conditions in No-Man's-Land.

Whenever we took over a new portion of front, we usually found the German snipers in the ascendant and the German patrols masters of No-Man's-Land. But invariably within a few days' time we would succeed in sweeping No-Man's-Land clean and silencing the snipers.

The snipers had a comparatively good time—no regular hours, no working parties or fatigues, no sentry go. They liked the life, and I did what I could to perfect the machine. We would watch a German sentry, or a likely spot for a sentry or sniper, for hours on end. Watching and waiting and studying, we would get to know the man's habits so well that we could almost anticipate his movements. . . . Then, one day, a fine bead would be drawn on him, over the heart, through telescopic sights that brought him so close that it seemed as if he would speak. He might be smiling at his inward thoughts, rehearsing his next leave, thinking of that last letter from home—and the trigger would be pressed. He would fall forward, dead.

That is sniping.

For ten years in Africa I used an ordinary Lee Enfield .303 sporting rifle, with magazine and Lyman back (or peep) sight. I used it with deadly effect and scarcely ever missed shots at every kind of antelope found in South-West and West Central Africa. I loved it all. BUT—I

used the same rifle in France against German sentries, AND HATED IT ALL.

The game was dirty. I had to give it up. The cool, calculated murder of defenceless men was diabolical. I ceased sniping when the war was very young. But it had to go on. Strictly speaking, however, there was no call on me for personal trigger-pressing. I left the actual shooting to those who did not mind. But I never revealed my inner thoughts, lest the snipers should become infected.

What courage ! What fine soldiering !

I always remembered my mother once telling me that of all the things she disliked, the most distasteful was the shooting of a hind, in Scotland. It was not killed outright, and while the stalker was giving the *coup de grâce* with his knife the animal turned to my mother and looked at her pleadingly with its great eyes. She could never forget that pathetic, painful moment. But she kept on shooting because it was "the thing to do."

Perhaps I should have applied the same reasoning to the sniping of Germans with a sporting rifle—because it was "the thing to do." After all, I was a soldier. For me, the more Germans killed the better, and the sooner the war would be over.

Well, I didn't do it. I shirked it and left it to others.

In 1918 I saw a Frenchwoman being shot up by an infuriated British soldier during a retreat.

I shot him out of hand—because it was “the only thing to do.” But I refused the French Medal of Humanity, which I was subsequently offered for my part in the unhappy incident, as I considered the joke to be rather out of place.

Later, strangely enough, when the tanks came into use and we sniped them with 18-pounder field-guns secreted well out to the front, I enjoyed the joke. It was different ; that sense of guilt, that conscious-stricken feeling of killing a man who at the moment was not menacing you and who was brought almost within hand-shaking distance by the telescopic sights, had disappeared.

So, you see, even killing has its ethics ! But I am confident that if every highly-placed officer had had personally to do the amount of killing I had to do in order to help them to win wars, there would be no wars. If civilians, particularly ruling civilians in their unimaginative security, had to do the sniping themselves, had to fire at their own brave, panic-stricken countrymen in the front-line, or had to run away from it, there would be no wars. It is not so much a question of “What are you prepared to have done to you ?” as “What are you prepared to do to others ?”

There is another side to this business of killing. Mass killing of men by men would appear to be comparatively easy ; deliberate killing such as execution by shooting is a painfully difficult duty ; emergency killing in order to stem panic is a grim necessity ; and killing by sniping is to

most men—I know there are exceptions—an act of cold murder, horrible to the most callous, distasteful to all but the most perverted. But—“ what are you prepared to do to others ” when it comes to women and children ?

The great Duke of Marlborough used to give twenty-four hours' notice to non-combatants before he bombarded cities, in order that the women and children might be removed to safety. During the siege of Ladysmith, the women and children were segregated in places free from danger. But no such warning or precaution was taken by the German command when it agreed to the ordering of the first daylight raid and bombardment of London's women and children during the last war. One wonders what its thoughts were—or the thoughts of the first German airman as he let loose his cargo of death and mutilation over the homes of innocent non-combatants. Was he able to calm his conscience by saying to himself : “ This is not murder ; this is war. This is not ME ; this is a soldier doing his duty, obeying the orders of those in command.” More than that—he was exposing his own wife and children, and those of his fellows, to the same form of murder in acts of retaliation by a bitterly horrified opponent.

Our British airman is a brave fellow, and there is none finer. He is prepared to be shot up or killed when the time comes—as most British servicemen are prepared. And he knows that his wife and children—if war comes to us again—

will have little defence against the high-explosives and poison gases of the marauding sky-hordes. He is chivalrous and unselfish and any day would jump into the sea or in front of a train or into a burning building to risk his own life in order to save the life of a foreign woman or child.

Yet, this same man, if—Heaven forbid !—the hour of dark emergency strikes again, will be asked, or ordered by people who know nothing of killing and what it means to those involved, to bomb, gas, burn, mutilate, blind, and destroy thousands of innocent women and children in “ enemy ” towns and cities.

Well, that is modern war. And so long as we go in for modern war men will be ordered to commit such deeds of killing. The military theorists demand it of them. Circumstances will demand it of them—just as circumstances demanded that I shot down my own men, my own comrades. . . . Which brings me to an amazing incident.

The behaviour of a veteran Colonel of the old *régime* who disliked the fight more than he disliked his men being put into the fight, compelled me to ask for his removal. But the higher command, choosing to ignore, as usual, that inefficiency was leading us into fresh disasters and needlessly losing thousands of valuable lives refused to act. It was not until a second appalling incident resulted from the incompetent Colonel's conduct, that I was able to have him



shifted. My superiors could not ignore the sorry facts. And the Colonel went—back to England.

A few weeks later, when I was temporarily commanding a division, a long letter came through the usual channels and was passed on by the War Office to G.H.Q. and so on downwards. It was signed by the veteran Colonel ; in it he accused me, as Brigade Commander, of “butchering” the men and of putting them into action before they were trained and when they were unfit. The Divisional Commander was called upon to report on the behaviour of this brigade butcher. But the butcher and the Divisional Commander happened by this time to be one and the same man !

In writing his letter of accusation the effete Colonel had admitted a military offence—that he had conspired with another timidly-minded Colonel—also removed—to defeat the legitimate aims of the “butcher” in the defeating of the enemy. I was able to take advantage of a priceless opportunity, of indicting the veteran at the expense of the hierarchy, of which he formed a part. In demanding the trial of this veteran of over thirty years’ service for mutiny, and alternatively, conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline—namely, refusing to fight and telling his men not to fight—I was really charging the whole military system with incompetence, and its leading members with supporting the theory that wars can be won without bloodshed and “butchery.”

Of course, there *had* been a certain amount of "butchering," due largely to the incompetence of that veteran Colonel and the officers he had failed to train. In one case twelve officers were knocked out by German rear-guard snipers simply because they would walk in the open, instead of taking care and cover. I suppose that the veteran knew that some of his men had been fired on by Australians because they endeavoured to retire from a post in open country. But I wonder if he knew that the Australian brigade-commander had said that he would turn a machine-gun on him the next time he saw him in the firing-line !

You must have those "butchers" if a war is to be won or conducted with less disaster than might be otherwise. Delicacy and timidity are not virtues for the field of battle. But when a man is successful in stopping panics by shooting, or securing objectives by sternly inculcating the desire to succeed—often with a loaded revolver in his hand—he is a rash fellow, a harsh fellow, a brute. This faulty assessment percolates from the unimaginative staffs through the bases to the London clubs and boudoirs where wars are always ordered and planned but never waged or won.

Butchers !—my Brigade-Major and I, each taking one battalion, he a fox-hunter and I a deer-stalker, scouting in open country, locating the German machine-guns and snipers, knocking them out or outflanking them, compelling their

retirement night and day, while the army in the rear fumbled on, their minds blank and their rifles rusty owing to the inferiority of the new troops.

Butchers !—they were sent into the line out of their turn at the very end of the war, forcing the passage of the canalized River Scheldt in the dark ; unknown to the senior formation in the rear, because they would have tried to prevent it, the brigade swept on until stopped by sheer necessity far ahead of the whole army.

Oh, yes, someone has to do the killing in war.

But at last there came an end to it. The final order issued by me was on the day before the Armistice. It was an order *not* to attack in any circumstances. Not another life was to be lost. The war was over. Our mission was fulfilled.

## Chapter 6

### HATE AND HABIT

WITH the Armistice and the cessation of hostilities came the reaction. Four and a quarter years of intensive training and warlike thinking, of straining and striving to the dictates of an all-embracing military system, had so imbued us with the habit of combat that many of us volunteered for service in North Russia. The world of so-called peace was muddled, bewildering. We were like lost sheep. So I, with my whole staff, offered *en bloc* to go to this new sphere of operations.

But to volunteer was by no means sufficient. Our North Russian ambitions were not realized because of the fact that, having been in France for so long and lacking the very necessary "pull" in influential circles, we were unable to oust the family favourites at the War Office.

I returned to England. For six monotonous months—during the glorious spring and summer—I helped to quell mutinies which broke out one after the other all over the South of England for various reasons, the chief of which was boredom in the ranks of the erstwhile fighters. While British soldiers could be induced to fight and to fight well for an ideal they believed they

understood, they would not submit to being fooled about for no reason whatsoever while their officers were so often gadding about and neglecting their welfare. There was little use now in shouting "Hang the Kaiser!" The fight was over, for better or worse; and all the carefully inculcated hatred and blood-lust of those four years of killing was now senseless and unsatisfying. The enemy, at least those who had survived the bullets and bayonets, the bombs and the shell-bursts, were back in Germany, and our own fed-up troops were shouting: "To hell with the Germans and Lloyd George. We want to go home!"

At last the ex-warriors returned to their homes and the impatience and the strife died like an echo of war. In their turn, those who had successfully shirked or escaped the war hastened to the South of France and the sunshine for the first time for five irksome years, forgetful of the debt they owed to each individual ex-Serviceman who had fought and done his best and pulled his weight—and often more than his weight—towards victory. There had been, of course, thousands of officers and men in khaki who had never intended to pull their weight at all and who had done their utmost to escape being shot at overseas.

During the confusion, during the disillusioning days of demobilization, when the aftermath of the war was spreading its terror through other European countries with revolt, civil war and

annexation, many of the best soldiers sought service on the new fronts. Palestine, Transjordan, Mesopotamia, Turkey, the Balkans and the Baltic, Central and Eastern Europe, and Northern Africa, swarmed with British soldiers of fortune seeking adventure and pay and loot and whatever else they might pick up. The habit of war remained like a grim legacy. New republics and new states struggled for a foothold in the surrounding morass—and hate and contempt and opportunism and self-aggrandisement flourished in those unhappy hunting grounds. No, the war was not over.

I accepted service as Inspector-General of the newly-formed army of the Lithuanian Republic, and as I looked at the map and compared the news from the various fronts with the secret information at my disposal, I rubbed my hands with glee. Here was the Devil's Paradise indeed!

Here were Kovno, the capital, with its ancient forts and Czarist barracks, Napoleon's Niemen of 1812—and Vilna, centre of dispute, inhabited mostly by Jews but claimed by Pole and Lithuanian alike. Here were the Curzon line, the Foch line, a neutral line, outposts, snipers, and all the rest; and a perfectly good railway which it was impossible to use between the two towns, which formerly had been friendly and united by a common bond—Czarist domination and Russian ill-treatment. Poles and Lithuanians scowled at each other, sniped at each other, raided each

other near Vilna : and farther north at Dvinsk they co-operated with each other and with the Letts—at least, on the surface—against the Red Bolos, for mutual benefit. To the west two German armies totalling about 30,000 men, under Von der Goltz and the Russian Bermont, were calmly settling down in illegal occupation of a neighbouring country.

Yes—truly the Devil's Paradise !

Despite the friction at Vilna the Poles were willing to help to eject the Germans. And no wonder ! A Polish army astride the railway running northwards to Riga, on Lithuanian soil, meant a Polish army of occupation in Lithuania. And the Lithuanians knew it !

When I arrived at Kovno the position was chaotic. A great deal of killing and being killed formed part of the daily round. No one knew exactly who his friend or foe was. We waged three wars and quelled a revolt at the same time. On one of the fronts we were actually fighting the Poles who were still supposed to be allied with us against the Russians in the north ! Just how mad conditions were is illustrated by the fact that the Poles and Letts stabbed us in the back without telling us !

It had been seriously suggested by the British Foreign Office that I should command an allied army of Lithuanians, Letts, and Poles against the invading Germans, and that munitions left over from the fiasco of the North-West campaign of Yudenitch, which had been organized against

the Russians, should be used for this ejection. The Lithuanians, however, always suspicious of the Poles, refused the offer.

A commission from Paris, under a French general, and composed of military representatives of the great and victorious powers, arrived in a special train, and with considerable ingenuity and tact persuaded the trespassing Germans to depart without much trouble. The calculated withdrawal was closely followed right up to the German frontier by Lithuanian cavalry.

I had with me a queer collection of British officers. There were only two who were absolutely reliable, and those two I had chosen myself. They were Colonel Muirhead,<sup>1</sup> now Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, and Major Mills, who, having also served with me in France, later followed me to Ireland, there to be ill-treated by the British Government because of his soldierly qualities.

All the officers received pay at English rates during their service in the Lithuanian Army. As time went on and the German mark tumbled precipitately, their position became impossible because the Lithuanians, with no money of their own and no coinage or paper money to inflate, became unable to pay their own private soldiers, much less the highly-paid Britons. As a result, mutiny and revolt broke out among the Lithuanian troops; many lives were lost, including that of a young American officer.

<sup>1</sup> Since appointed Under Secretary of State for Air.



The first outward manifestation of trouble happened one night when I was at dinner in my hotel. Discontent among the unpaid soldiers had been increased by the extravagance and greed of the political leaders ; and it was finally fermented to explosion by the Poles and with the aid of a certain charming international lady of undefined morals. The Lithuanian Army had been equipped largely with British munitions, and when the trouble broke I listened to British shells, fired from British guns, whizzing over the hotel ; my chagrin was increased by the knowledge that the Lithuanian gunners had been partly trained by British officers and N.C.O.'s, who had served in the Royal Regiment during the war. But they, fortunately, had failed to oil their buffer springs with the result that the guns were immediately put out of action.

It is unwise to hold banquets while the population stand hungrily outside, with noses pressed against the glittering windows and with the aroma of rich cooking pervading the air. The Lithuanian Commander must have pondered thus when he found himself a few hours later a prisoner in the gunner lines across the River Niemen, awaiting a firing party of his Red rebels.

The scenes that followed were both comic and tragic as Colonel Muirhead and I drove up to the firing-line in a droshky, along the ice-bound and snow-covered roads on sleighs, the bells jingling merrily, and the reluctant driver urged to

patriotic action by the pressure of my loaded revolver in the small of his back.

It was a remarkable battle between the loyal troops and the rebels. The firing-lines were opposed across the mighty river ; an iron bridge spanning the river was defended at either end by the rival forces and on the main road near our headquarters in the vacated barracks a heavily-armoured and turreted car throbbed impatiently. I believe that that battle might have gone on far longer had not Colonel Muirhead and I jumped into the armoured car, to career madly over the bridge to we knew not what or where. So surprised were the rebels on the other side when we made our appearance and emerged to ask what they had done to the Commander-in-Chief that their opposition collapsed at its centre. The Commander-in-Chief, who had been quarrelling with me for many weeks, came out from his enforced seclusion, threw his arms fervently around my neck, and murmured something in excited Lithuanian about old soldiers never dying.

This touching episode ended, Colonel Muirhead and I scoured the country-side in an open car, with cavalry, but found nothing except vacant spaces. The inhabitants had fled to the forests in terror.

Later, the shops which had been closed, opened their doors for business ; and liquor, which had in the meantime been forbidden, flowed freely. All was again quiet on the Lithuanian front.

. . . But only until the next morning, when the real business began.

A court martial does not, in time of emergency, take long to assemble—and still less to convict when treason and revolt are the charges. I shall never know how many people were shot for revolt. I shall never know how many rebels dug their own graves in the frozen earth. From my hotel each morning I watched the condemned men pass on to their doom in open wagons, singing loudly and in good cheer as they thundered at top speed towards eternity. They cared neither for God nor man.

The men to blame were those who feasted while others starved, who drank themselves into a stupor while others could not even have a glass of milk. One of those men, a senior officer, has since been executed at the same spot; others, more lucky, have been in and out of jail as the fortunes of politics changed with the mood of the crowd or the chance of the ballot-box, or the intrigues of friends and opponents. Wisley, the Commander-in-Chief, reverted to his calling and once more became a farmer. Some-time later, my friend—an able, chief staff-officer of the old Russian regime and an ex-guardsman—was court martialled and shot for alleged treason, while the President of the Republic was thrown into jail by the Foreign Minister, who was eventually thrown into jail himself for alleged embezzlement. The President emerged to resume the reins. And he holds them still.

Some of our own officers became infected with "Continental intrigue"—unknown in that particular form to the British Army. One of them, a D.S.O., M.C., plotted to kill me because I interfered in an undesirable love affair which was hampering his work. He planned to have me kidnapped, shot, and thrown into an ice-hole in the river while I was passing out of my hotel to a droshky on my way to a dance.

Fortunately, I was warned. The next morning I sent for my would-be assassin. He appeared before me at my study table and he stood to attention while I looked at him in the face. Under the lid of my table my revolver was loaded and cocked and levelled at him, ready for the slightest move on his part.

"Search Captain ——" I said to an officer. A loaded revolver was produced from a great-coat pocket, and after it had been unloaded it was laid on my table. "You want to kill me?" I asked.

There was no reply. He stood stiffly, mutely. "It's lucky for you you didn't make a move," I explained, revealing my own revolver and laying it on the table. "You leave by the night train, under escort. *And don't come back!*"

A few months later, when I took command of the Auxiliary Division R.I.C., at the Curragh, a very smart officer appeared on parade. I recognized him as my old friend with the murderous intentions. After parade he came up to me and saluted.

"I want to resign, sir," he intimated. "I shall be no use here. You'll have your knife in me."

"This is a new show," I told him. "I'm willing to forget the past. You have to earn your living, and I have to earn mine."

We buried the hatchet there and then—I, who had been so near to death at his hands, and he who had been so near to death at my hands. . . .

After the Lithuanian revolt there was no money in the state bank and still less desire for the aid of British officers. (All countries, if left to themselves, prefer to be governed, even badly, by themselves, than "magnificently" by outsiders.) A financial contretemps brought an end to our Lithuanian adventure. After all the bloodshed and the treachery I was weary for a sight of England, and I was jubilant as I settled down in a sumptuous sleeping-car across the Prussian frontier. The sleeping-car had been provided by the Germans, who, at that time, I thoroughly disliked. But that did not detract from my pleasure! I was glad to be leaving the unhappy republic. I can say now "Good luck!" to it; it survives and thrives, and one day, who knows, it may be the German corridor into Russia. What then, I wonder? But those thoughts did not disturb me as I looked back in the direction of Kovno and remarked to my companion: "Thank God that sort of thing can't happen in England!"

Can't happen in England! Silly ass that I

was ! Within six months I was doing worse things with the Black and Tans in Ireland—things so skilfully and so subtly put over that it took me a long time to discover for myself what sort of game was really being played under the stormy surface. Had I been told, in 1918, after that four-and-a-quarter years of blood-letting, that in our own British Isles I should be witnessing acts of atrocity, by men in the King's uniform, which far exceeded in violence and brutality those acts I lived to condemn in the seething Baltic, I—well, I should have laughed out loud.

I know that it is customary for certain Englishmen to say that the Irish started the mass assassination and that they only received their just due when the English conformed and gave tit for tat. I realize that, largely owing to its own fault, the British Government was in an exceedingly difficult position. But I am not here concerned with that, because whenever there is something to be done which calls for justification, and shrieks for renunciation, the British Government is usually "in a difficulty." I am concerned here with the conduct of Englishmen in the uniform of the Crown, because I greatly respect the Crown and have no wish to see it dragged in the mud. When I did a deal of butchering in the Great War and in other wars I was guided by the knowledge that the prestige of the Crown, which is the country, must be upheld at whatever cost, as becomes the profession of a soldier.

But Ireland was a different question.

In the Great War almost all we did we admitted. We were seldom ashamed to say what we did. And in Lithuania they assassinated the Reds and said they did so. They shot their prisoners by court order, not while "attempting to escape," and they did not attempt to claim respectability behind a smoke-screen of democratic humbug; nor did they tell lies in Parliament to save their faces.

But in Ireland we protested that certain things were never done by us; and we still persist in maintaining our innocence and our virtue.

We murdered the Irish—very often, the innocent Irish—and then we said that the Irish murdered each other. I know that many of the Irish were rebels, and I know that many of them put themselves "in the wrong" by doing things that were wrong. But I have yet to be convinced that two wrongs go to make a right, or that the sins and errors and excesses of exasperated populaces can be judged by the same standard of conduct as is applied to the British Crown Forces when they are faced with the gravest provocation or the most difficult tasks. We still had our traditional standard of deportment when charges of barbaric atrocity against the Germans were on the lips of all of us, including the British Government.

But in Ireland . . . ! Let it be said here that the British Army in Ireland behaved well in the most trying circumstances; they worthily upheld

tradition in 1920-1921. But the British Government, knowing how the army would behave, raised a division of ex-officers of the Great War and allocated to them, as policemen, the task of organized murder which disciplined soldiery would not, and never could, contemplate. To tell a soldier to commit murder is to ask him to tear up the Army Act and with it his discipline.

Oh, yes, the Government reasoned well. That is why the ranks of the depleted R.I.C.—a respectable corps at one time—were filled with thousands of ex-Service private soldiers and N.C.O.s. They were not, perhaps, the best material, for the best got the civil jobs first. But from the military point of view they were probably the best, provided the rule of the revolver and the calm commander was maintained.

Mistaking my point of view as a soldier, the Government placed me in command of some of these men and issued orders to them to murder through secret channels. And I was expected to submit.

I resigned. I resigned not so much because I objected to giving the Irish assassins the tit for the tat, but because we were murdering and shooting up innocent people, burning their homes and making new and deadly enemies every day. What was worse, we were swearing to the world that the Irish were murdering each other because they were divided against themselves—or, perhaps, for fun !



The Government's idea failed. It could not do else than fail. Force, to be successfully applied, must be honestly applied against the guilty. That is one reason why an International Police Force will not function effectively and why war settles nothing.

Of course, in my front line in France, when I was responsible for its safety, and when I was faced with local defeat, I had to use my revolver to stop the enemy's approach or to prevent my own men from running away from it. True, it may be wrong to shoot my own men. But I had to shoot, provided I shot the right man and not the man who was not running away or who had not lost his head in panic. If I had shot the wrong man I would not only have lost the services of a good soldier, but I would surely have been shot by someone else for behaving unfairly. The British soldier has a splendid sense of justice, as well as of humour, and he understands front-line existence. To him the Government's attitude in Ireland was wicked, unjust, dishonest.

It must be remembered that the soldier in Ireland knew what the Auxiliaries were doing and what the Black and Tans were doing, and each day when he read his newspaper in the officers' mess, the sergeants' mess, the corporals' room or the recreation room, the lies told in Parliament in defence of the murderous police provoked more than a contemptuous smile. And he frowned when he remembered that the

police were dressed very similar to him and were often mistaken for him, and that his officers were trying, by court martial, innocent Irishmen for the deeds perpetrated by the police, and were finding them guilty and having them hanged, while, at the same time, they were trying a few of the police for murdering Irishmen and acquitting them on evidence produced by the Crown.

Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, an Ulsterman, and chief of staff at that time, was fully alive to the dangers to the army. But, true to type, he had no solution to offer save the futile one of shooting more rebels by "roster"—a suggestion which, not unnaturally, led to his own assassination in a London street. If the commanding officers of the army in France, the generals and staff officers, had been shot by "roster" for failing to hold the lines, the idea would have been much more acceptable. The Irish were fighting only for what they were refused, until they got part of what they wanted at the point of the revolver, having put the British Government in the wrong by forcing them to practise assassination which the world in general condemned.

So, I held a camouflaged command as a policeman trying to do a soldier's job without the moral support afforded to soldiers in war-time. I resigned when I discovered the deception, for the Crown regime was nothing more or less than Fascist dictation cloaked in righteousness. If Fascism ever comes to this country it will come,

not in a black shirt, but in a pink "huntin' " coat (which will, of course, escape the new regulations against mock military uniforms). It will be cheered by the grooms and butlers—at least, for a time—by the small traders in country villages and towns, and by that bourgeois portion of the population garbed in black coat and striped trousers which still believes in fairy tales !

I do not suppose that Kevin Barry, who was hanged at dawn one winter's morn in Dublin, in 1920, for shooting a young British soldier in a Dublin street as he guarded a military lorry drawn up by the side of the pavement, cared very much if his end were to come from the bullets of the firing squad or the hangman's rope. He was fighting for a "right " against a "wrong," against the cruel injustices of a system imposed on him and his in the sacred name of law and order and decent fellowship. Red tape demanded that as Barry had committed "murder " in the eyes of the English law in that portion of Ireland over which martial law did not reign, he must be hanged. Had this boy, he was a university student, done what he did, in Munster, where martial law reigned, he would have been shot by order of a court martial. But under the Fascistic Act for the Restoration of Law and Order in Ireland, the commander ordered him to be strung up. In a properly constituted and Government-accredited war, where the "rules of play " are different, he would have been a sniper. Had he, a licensed killer, been captured

by the enemy, he would not necessarily have been executed. The rules of play for warfare would have ordained that he be concentrated safely in an internment camp until the end of hostilities.

I had a great deal to do with the last hours of young Barry's life, as it was my duty to supply a party of auxiliary policemen (ex-officers all), under a Regular Army officer of the Reserve of Officers, to watch over the lad in the prison cell so that the condemned prisoner might not commit suicide and thus cheat the hangman of his fee.

I visited Barry only once. When I did so I was reminded of the last hours of young Johnny Crockett—an episode I have already described earlier in this book. The setting and the circumstances were different. Crockett did what he did, in desperation, perhaps, to escape the cold and wet of a fire-trench during a grim winter campaign. Barry did what he did while fired by the desire to free his Ireland from what he considered an unfair yoke ; with his eyes wide open to the facts and the consequences, he was prepared to forfeit his life in combat or by execution.

Neither of these lads whined. Had I had the opportunity I might have given Barry the chance I gave Crockett—of getting drunk in his last few hours. But I had no such opportunity ; and, in any case, I very much doubt if he would have accepted the offer if it had been placed before

him, because he was a proud boy. He was proud of dying for an ideal, for the freedom of Ireland. He was not sorry to leave this earth ; he was glad to die as he was dying. Crockett, on the other hand, never disguised his sorrow at having to leave us.

In France I had no difficulty in finding a firing-party to shoot Crockett. It was there at my instant command. But in Ireland, as no hangman could be found to hang Barry, we had to bring one all the way from England, in disguise, and in great secrecy. He came three hundred miles across the sea, surreptitiously, to hang a rebel murderer. Or—he came three hundred miles across the sea, surreptitiously, to hang a soldier of Ireland. You see, so much depends on one's point of view.

In France I made Crockett drunk to get him out of his misery. In Ireland some of the men who had most to do with Barry's last hours made *themselves* drunk to get them out of *their* misery. Fortunately, I am a teetotaller.

In France, after the execution of Crockett, we marched back to billets headed by our band, with our heads up and our chests out, unashamed, proud of our traditions, under the spell of war. But——

In Ireland, that day in Dublin, crowds of praying women knelt outside the prison gate at the fatal hour, chanting and wailing, while the soldiery confined itself to barracks behind locked gates.

The officer in command of my midnight watches over the doomed Barry—a typical soldier of the old, pre-war days, who had fought in Africa against the Boers and in France against the Germans—was disgusted with the part Fate had called upon him to play.

“It’s a damned shame !” he said to me.

At the time when Barry was being hanged, for the murder of an Englishman, by order of the commander of the military forces, and when police officers were being wrongfully acquitted of the murder of Irishmen, by military courts under the jurisdiction of the military command, the commander of the forces in Ireland was telling the Cabinet in London that unless hostilities were brought to a conclusion before the winter of 1921 the whole of the British Army in Ireland would have to be relieved because of the fact that the army, placed under an unfair strain, were becoming demoralized.

Never before had I heard of the demoralization of the British Army in modern times, or of the probable demoralization. In the days of my youth, when cholera used to break out in India, and cholera camps for the British Army had to be formed there, there used to be a fear of demoralization setting in. But the “enemy” was met with the usual display of British valour ; officers would return from leave and share the danger with their men, and special entertainments were arranged in the camps in which all took part.

It was different in Ireland. It was difficult to entertain, with murder at the gates, with Kevin Barry on the scaffold, and with O'Leary and others in their graves unavenged.

Why this demoralization of the British Army, which its commander feared? Was it because of the men I killed or the men I refused to kill, when I resigned my unhappy job? Was it because of the men he and I killed, Barry included? Was it because of—our own men who should have been killed, of the people who were killed and about whom nobody knew very much, of the men the Cabinet killed or ordered us to kill, or ordered others to kill because we refused?

Hitler recently cleaned up a good many of his degenerate followers at the point of the revolver. It was asked: "Who burnt the Reichstag?" But who burnt Cork? Who burnt down the Dublin Custom House? Who destroyed the Four Courts by bombardment?

That British commander may, after all, have been right in contemplating the demoralization of the British Army in Ireland—even if he was adversely criticized by Mr. Winston Churchill! Assassination is not a recognized method of attack in the British Army, nor is acquittal in the face of glaringly proved facts deliberately unproved to suit the occasion. Our men of the British Army did not assassinate. What they did know, however, was that the free hand of Fascism assassinated, and that in the unsmiling

Irish eyes all the British uniforms looked the same.

The British military courts were known to the Irish as Courts of Acquittal. The officers comprising them did not deliberately make false findings and acquittals. They did their job—and that was to try according to the evidence produced. Alas, the evidence at their disposal was often false or made ineffective by the suppression of facts, due to the machinations of the Fascist auxiliaries.

Was it necessary to hold the British Empire together by murdering one's own under the cloak of a gloriously unstained uniform—the uniform of the British Army which has remained clean throughout the centuries? If the British Empire can only be held together by such Fascist methods, then it had better perish. But this, we know, thank God, need not be.

We know, also, that the rank and file of the British Army would never go Fascist, and many of its regimental officers would not, unless abandoned by the British people through lack of understanding.

The Coalition Government of 1920-1921—as dictatorial, and therefore as nearly Fascist, as any British Government is ever likely to be—failed completely in its attempt on Irish democracy, because the army would not comply with the rules of this intolerable Fascism. How vastly different are the circumstances of the Spanish Civil War of 1936—a war led by soldiers, allied



with the Church, against the democracy of the people of Spain.

The Irish and the English were so weary of the slaughter in 1921 that, with the realization that all the death and treachery would lead to nowhere in the end, they turned to God for peace and for comfort. The clergy of the Roman Catholic, the Irish Protestant, and the Nonconformist churches joined together with the people of all classes and creeds and demanded a "Truce of God."

They got a truce. But it was a truce of politicians. So the slaughter continued and the trouble still smoulders—as trouble smoulders in many parts of the world to-day due to political truces.

The Irish problem is not yet solved. It will be solved only when the people who live in Ireland and the Government which rules in England learn to adapt to their use the technique and honour of the front-line trenches, where not to play the game is to court death and disaster.

If the governments of the world would learn to play the game in accordance with the glorious spirit displayed in the front line, then the men I killed and the men others killed will not have died in vain.

How far off is the dawn of that great day?

## *Chapter 7*

### COLONEL BLIMP WITH HIS HEAD IN THE SAND

WHEN one ponders on the years of killing, the deceits and the false propaganda and the inspired hate which were all part of the "game" of war, one comes up against the simple question : "What good did all the strife do ?"

Of course, the popular answer is so obvious. It is this : "It saved England from slavery."

Well, I cannot tell you that I fought hard for many years in order that England might be "saved." That thought never entered my mind. I fought simply because it was "the thing to do," and because I fought, and was a trained soldier, there was nothing else I could do but to fight a hard fight. One either fights hard or does not fight at all. It is impossible to argue that point.

But, it may be argued that "the right thing to do" was to save England. True, that may be so. And in extenuation you might add that as you long for a reign of justice you must be assured that that justice has a reasoned force behind it. That, also, is true.

But what is this word "force" ? It is a varying quantity. It has many interpretations and many misinterpretations. We are apt to use the word

in its crudest sense, and while we so persist we will always find plenty of trouble around us. Smug and self-satisfied people, most of whom have never themselves fired a shot in fury or desperation, been fired at, or even heard a shot fired in anger, proclaim to the world that war can be made a just weapon by changing the label, by endorsing it with the League of Nations stamp of respectability and calling it "Collective Security" backed up by the additional force of Sanctions (i.e. the tightening of the belts of the innocents and the ultimate starvation of the non-combatants). Such practices, in addition to being cruel and calculated, must invariably extend war instead of curtailing it because people will always fight for grub, and fight hard, fight bitterly and ruthlessly.

In any case, allies find it difficult enough to co-operate successfully in war-time. What would be the position when international armies or, if you like, police forces were called upon to co-operate in a general campaign? We are here presented with the spectacle of a military absurdity. A League army may be a high ideal—but it was also an ideal of France that a League army would be used against Germany. We have already sufficient history documented for posterity to prove what havoc can be wrought when ideals are in opposition.

Mr. Aldous Huxley has explained quite clearly, in simple language, just precisely what "force" is when construed in modern terms. This force

which well-meaning but ill-advised visionaries would use to support justice comprises such things as high-explosive shells, gun-cotton, Lyddite, Melinite, mustard gases and poisonous smokes, steel dug-outs and steel helmets, gas-masks of uncertain efficiency and in insufficient quantity, 40-miles-an-hour tanks careering wickedly across scarred country, 300-miles-an-hour aeroplanes flying above us so that airmen may rain bombs and gas upon the innocents while the guilty escape, and the inspired hatred of diabolically ingenious propaganda.

That, then, is "force" for the upholding of justice. It is not possible to argue that such force may be applied with advantage in the name of "just" warfare. When panic is let loose, when reason departs as anger surges in, it is too late to argue on ethical lines in beautiful—or ambiguous—terms. Given the moment and the circumstance, that "force" of theory becomes a vastly different thing in grim practice. And its very presence is a danger to those things we would guard—peace and justice. If I am on the Strazeel Road with my blood up and my courage fast oozing out of my finger-tips there is only one thing to do to prevent me using my revolver and shooting, in the name of justice. And that is to disarm me.

There, in my opinion, after a lifetime of soldiering is the answer for the whole world.

"Hah!" I hear; "so you want England to be enslaved."

I want nothing of the kind. I want England for ever to be free and great—God knows I've fought for her often enough in my time—but I know that if things are allowed to go on as they are, not only will England be dissolved, but civilization will disappear with it in the avalanche.

If you do not like the answer, reader, that does not affect the truth of it. It is the only answer. It is the soldier's answer, the answer of humanity, of common sense. And it is the answer that makes the case of Canon "Dick" Sheppard so strong and the case of the political world so weak.

The means always determine the ends. After the Peace had been signed and registered at Versailles, and ratified in the capitals of the consenting nations, I went to Lithuania, and the uproar which I encountered there led to the seizure by stealth and armed forces of Vilna by the Poles ; this in its turn led to counter-action by the Lithuanians who seized Memel by similar methods in order to patch up an impossible peace in the eyes of the people of Lithuania. The echoes of Vilna and Memel remain with us to-day. Thanks to the muddle in Europe, produced by the impossible Treaty of Versailles, Lithuania lies at the feet of Germany, to be kicked as a Baltic Belgium in the event of a German war with Russia ; it is, in fact, a corridor round the flank of Poland towards Moscow, a second cockpit of fighting Europe.

There we have the means dictating the ends. So, too, we find a similar situation in Ireland and

in Palestine. Friction, prejudice, and tragic misunderstanding rule the order of the day in Ulster and the Irish Free State, because the impossible was attempted in 1921. Political expediency cannot fulfil the word of God.

Is it conceivable that the same horse can be sold to two different people without trouble resulting?

In Palestine, both Arab and Jew were promised the same thing by the British Government—not because the Government considered their promise the right thing to do, but simply because two separate sets of circumstances in a period of war made it expedient for rash promises to be made in contradiction of each other. One promise was made to the Jews in order to obtain their influence and money; and the same promise was made to the Arabs in order to incite them to active revolt in the desert against the Turkish rule. The same methods were employed in Ulster and the South of Ireland and in other places dissected by force.

Such methods may be more subtle than the rule of the revolver on the Strazeel Road, but they are far more damnable and lasting.

“A hostile Ireland on the English flank will always be a danger to England in war-time.” . . . Old words, rehashed to serve the pressing needs of the moment. But is it seriously suggested that there *need* be a hostile Ireland at all? Not when the facts are faced.

Ulster is part of the British Empire—and so is

the Irish Free State, technically speaking. The Empire can only be cemented if and when the British King gives his orders to Ulster to act impartially and unselfishly as many of the Orangemen did, under my command, in France. Redmond's dream of the return of the victorious Irishmen, united in ideas and ideals, must be made to come true. There are other dreams, for which many valuable lives were sacrificed, waiting to be fulfilled throughout the world to-day. Alas, if only it were as easy to make an honest peace as it is to make a dishonest promise how different modern history might read.

The trouble about war and peace is that both are usually discussed by people who understand neither. Soldiers confuse peace-time pageantry with war-time necessity because they are very good at the former and unskilled in the latter. One of the men who wrote *Ceremonial* was a failure in France. Politicians, on the other hand, talk about force and sanctions as if both had something to do with the "justice" of war. But soldiers know that it is impossible to stop war by making war, even if politicians try to do so.

When certain politicians talk of settling Europe by military means of peace (there is no such thing, of course), they point to the Saar and tell us that what happened there demonstrates military force for peace at its best. But when is military force really at its best? Surely during a successful war. Troops, after all, are not kept and paid just to provide pageantry at military

tattoos or political processions. No, to hold up the Saar force as an example of what an International Police Force would be like is to talk arrant nonsense. Nobody wanted to fight in the Saar ; even the commander of those troops keeping law and order was told on no account to " fight " if trouble arose. Would an International Police Force ever receive such orders in the field of dissension ?

Had the Saar force failed, no national prestige would have suffered. If a League of Nations police force failed, the prestige or sovereignty of the League would suffer. And when a sovereignty is at stake trouble—fighting-trouble—is inevitable. Is that so very difficult to appreciate ?

Now, we are calmly increasing the fighting services, at a cost of some £1,500,000,000, in order to secure safety. But we are forgetting that brains are required to win a war and that we have not got the military brains to control and use this vast machine in the field. In the last war we managed to scrape through, despite the lack of brains, thanks to a superior " weight of metal " ; in the next war we will need more military brains than ever, despite, or because of, the vastly weightier machine we are constructing.

Our new system of rearmament is at least serving the purpose of encouraging our Colonel Blimps to hide their heads, stupidly like the ostrich, in the sand !

We cannot escape the fact that we are a nation



of shopkeepers and not a military nation or a martial one. We did none too well on land during the last war, and we hesitated to risk a decisive action at sea lest we got the worst of it and so lost the whole war. These are facts some of us would like to ignore, but cannot. Of course, I must emphasize here that I am not belittling our soldiers, our fighting men—than whom none is more splendid in any circumstances—but criticizing the “brains” in command.

This brings me to another serious aspect of the situation which now faces us. The Government are preparing gas-masks which, I am told on the highest scientific authority, are not reliable. Even if they were reliable I am perfectly certain that women and children and elderly people could not long survive in them. During the war it was difficult to fight in a gas-mask for any length of time, although it could be done. Three times was I subjected to long spells in action when to remove the mask for an instant meant sudden and awful death. The effect on the system was diabolical. We dreaded it, even although—unlike the civilians—we were trained in the use of gas-masks. And the masks did not always keep out the poisons around us.

I don't remember ever risking the life of a single soldier during the war by telling him to put his trust in things that were not trustworthy. Yet the Government is committing a piece of pretty treachery by asking us to put our trust in unreliable gas-masks. They are indulging in

grim panic-making in order to create the right national mentality for a vast programme of rearming.

When treachery came upon one during the war years in France, that treachery was open to reprisal. For instance, the man who—admittedly, in a panic—stole both my horses at Ervillers and caused me to march twenty miles after a five-day fight without any sleep, never stole another. It was my duty to see to that. But then, one cannot shoot a whole Government !

What right has the Home Office to tell people in my neighbourhood in peaceful Surrey that they must prepare for gas attack and aerial bombardment if war should come and enemy planes attack us in the night, when it is quite unlikely that, for obvious reasons, such a nature of things would ever occur in our rural countryside ?

An aerial onslaught, with gas, bomb, and fire, would be carried out not in the country-side, but on the vulnerable points—large towns, cities, docks, wharves, slum properties, power stations—and our problem down in the country would be to make arrangements for receiving the panic-stricken fugitives from the centres of devastation. Does it need any great stretch of imagination to visualize what would happen, when the rich came in their own cars, the lucky poor in commandeered vehicles, and the unlucky poor on foot ? They would come in their fear-driven hordes, to pollute the water, soil the land, seize

the available food supplies. And the law of the survival of the fittest would raise its ugly head.

I had a taste of these things in Canada, when I had to prevent looting at Fort William during a strike, and at Rainy River when forest fires swept the country for miles around and left thousands homeless and exposed to the rigours of the open prairie and the terrors of the stampeding mob. We shot looters at sight, by order.

In the event of the aerial invasion of England our problem in Surrey would be much the same as I had to contend with in Canada. Men's revolvers might then merge once more from holsters for an unpleasant duty. . . . Who can tell what mere man may do or become under such strain? Is this war? No.

Why tell us wrongly? Why not tell us the truth—now? Why ask us to put our trust in untrustworthy things—in big armaments for defence, in gas-masks? Why tell us that we are building an air-force to protect our land, when it is known that the majority of the new aeroplanes are bombers, not fighters? Have we not sense enough to know that Governments don't use bombers over the heads of their own nationals. These are not machines of defence, but machines of reprisal or aggression or attack.

It would be as well for us to remember that on every occasion on which it has been possible for a British Government to be wrong about war preparations during the past century and the present, wrong it has been.

This £1,500,000,000 for the defence of the country takes a great deal of swallowing. What is behind it? We are not *all* fools. Two glaring facts cannot be ignored. Firstly—if a hostile neighbour intends to use force against us in order to make us surrender a colony or grant a concession, it will bombard, say, London by surprise and at night. Assuming the enemy airplanes were spotted crossing the coast, there would only be from seven to nine minutes' notice for our own aircraft to climb 10,000 feet to intercept the raiders. Even if they met and fought, all the invaders would not be brought down, and bombs would still be dropped on the civilians, on the women and children. Why not tell us these things and admit that the idea of our defence is one of attack, of reprisal over the enemy's capital, killing their women and children?

Secondly—despite all the munitions and air fleets and human personnel available, would the war-lords know how to use them to win? The Battle of the Somme was lost in the first few minutes because the war-lords forgot the lessons they had learnt on the barrack-square when recruits. Will they repeat that blunder? I believe they have already done so, by planning wrongly.

Sailors and soldiers are now out of the military picture. Mr. Amery raised an important point when, in the debate on the Defence Estimates, he asked the Prime Minister what was in his mind

when he said that our frontier was on the Rhine. Was it an imaginary frontier to be crossed by aircraft or by infantry ?

No answer was given. But the distinction is vital. If we are making plans to be prepared to send an army to operate on the Continent the requirements and organization would be totally different from those necessary for defence against aerial invasion.

Force ! Force for the upholding of justice ! Force of "just" warfare ! Collective security and sanctions ! Where are these creations of humbug leading us to ? Surely not to peaceful ways and peaceful days.

I am inclined to think that the problem of national defence would sound differently from the lips of a Dominion soldier who is untrammelled by the fetters of a tradition built up on errors. Monarsh and Currie, of Dominion origin and originality, could have commanded the British Armies in France with far greater success than we knew.

But the Dominions have no intention of being mixed up in the troubles of Europe. Recently I have sounded Dominion generals on the subject of our national defence in the United Kingdom and I found that it was agreed that the best defence is a realization of the times we now live in and the limitations that confront us. Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, all were agreed that the following points embodied the best safety plan :

(a) that the defence of Britain lay within the framework of the Kellogg Pact ;

(b) that the defence of the Empire lay, too, within that same framework ;

(c) that a permanent bureau should be set up somewhere, the members of which should be those states which had signed the Kellogg Pact ; that the problems that are the causes of war should be considered and decided upon by the states sitting in permanent session as part of the machinery of the bureau for the settlement of world affairs ; and that states should agree to settle their troubles in this manner without resort to war ;

(d) that, immediately, all nations concerned should remodel their " defences " in relation to their needs : that is to say, all mobile forces and forces of expedition should be abolished, and garrison guards should be constituted ; and the aid of scientific and engineering skill should be directed towards the ultimate elimination, so far as is possible, of men by the substitution of scientific apparatus ;

(e) that the policing of the seas be similarly constituted ;

(f) that the air forces of the world should be abolished and civil aviation controlled by international licence ;

(g) that all territorial forces, national guards and militias, as such, should be disbanded, and that there be established instead civil guard reserves for the maintenance of internal order, it

being a constitutional duty inherent in every right-thinking citizen in every country to be responsible for the upholding of the law and assisting the police on lawful occasions.

This outline met with the approval of senior members of the American Legion and the National Guard.

In America, as in England, the Diehards of Washington—who are hampered by the precedent and tradition of their British ancestors (Washington was a captain of British militia)—are opposed to change. They, too, are willing to leave the unpleasant job of pressing the revolver-trigger in battle to the men who are prepared to risk their reputations in order to win wars.

The merit of the plan which I have briefly described is that it is workable within the scope of existing international legislation. It conforms to the desires of most Englishmen anxious about the problem of "defence," but perplexed when told, wrongly, that "offence is the soul of defence." Such a plan would gradually bring about that remarkable state which exists along the whole of the Canadian-American border, where there is not now a single military defence, and where, a little over a hundred years ago, war was waged bitterly and defences abounded everywhere. This should please the rigid pacifists and all those conscientiously opposed to war, and make it possible for them to co-operate, for the first time, with the men who shot to kill during the Great War because they had no alternative.

The plan is the practical implementation of the Kellogg Pact, already ratified. It supplies, in extension, the trust and common sense which the pact lacks. It should please, for instance, the airmen ; for to be abolished is one thing, but merely to be changed by an ideal is another. Surely it is better to fly the skies controlled for the benefit of mankind and this thing we call civilization, than to remain uncontrolled, and uncontrollable, with the destruction of civilization a fearful shadow on the horizon. Surely that is a noble adventure which should appeal to the hearts of the chivalrous.

War has changed. God knows, the increasing number of dead and mutilated in each succeeding warfare testifies to the changing nature of man's killing powers. In the last war it was hard enough for the sharpshooter to do the deeds he was called on to perform—but he never slew women and children deliberately and in cold blood. True, women and children were killed by slow starvation, but that was the result of collective action beyond the personal control of the fighting man. At sea the beginning of the new phase in warfare was evidenced in the sinking of merchant ships and the drowning of innocent, non-combatant passengers of both sexes. The sailors who performed such deeds of murder stood condemned before all the world.

But I often wonder if our British airman would be able to bring himself to the terrible task of indiscriminately destroying women and children



by high-explosive, poison gas and liquid fire, of murdering the sick and the aged, for no reason save that of revenge or reprisal dictated by others. And would those "others," operating behind the scenes, perpetrate the same awful deeds themselves?

Despite all the men I have killed in battle, I do not believe that in any circumstances could I compel myself to aid in such acts of diabolical murder.

Could *you*?

As I write that question, here in the peace of my sunlit study, with the years of my soldiering in the shadows behind me, there comes to me a scene which often visits me. . . . Backwards through thirty-three years I go, and I am riding across the desert battle-field of Sokoto, a few hours after the fight has been lost and won. . . . Around me lay the decomposing bodies of men, some clothed in fine robes, others almost naked—masters and slaves united, for once, in a common cause. Carcasses of horse and camel were lying about me, and the vultures and the hungry dogs were savagely devouring the remains of man and beast. Those dead warriors of the upper and lower classes of Fularni and Hausa, pitifully armed—indeed, in comparison with the foe, practically unarmed—had faced the withering fire of modern Maxims and artillery unflinchingly to the bitter end. Thus had so-called barbarism been opposed by so-called civilization.

From the outset the task of those natives was

hopeless. The British casualties were nil. I got a medal for that job—a silver medal, on one side of which is the head of King Edward VII. It was a medal for brave service against those practically defenceless natives.

The fall of Sokoto, the spiritual capital of the Hausa States, effectively added an empire to our previously pegged-out claim. The scramble for Africa was almost at its end.

As I rode across the battle-field distant sounds struck my ears. I asked my orderly, a Hausa soldier from Dal, what the noise was. His reply was pidgin-English, but nevertheless effective.

“All the *mallams* (priests) are praying to Allah,” he said.

“For the dead?” I asked casually.

“No, no.” He showed impatience with me. “For what missionaries at Lokoga (he had been a servant in a mission) call the insides of people.”

“Good gracious!” I explained in amazement. “Why, the *ungulus* (vultures) are getting the insides of the people.”

He shook his head, disdainfully. “You no understand. I no mean what you call’em guts. They be nothing.”

“I think they’re important,” I ventured to suggest to him.

“Not when man dead.”

“Well, what the devil are the *mallams* praying for?”

“Mr. Miller, at Gerko (a mission station), he call’em soul,” replied the man from Dal.

So, it was as conventional as that, I thought. "They are praying for the repose of the souls of the dead Fularni, killed in battle—as the Roman Catholics do in Ireland."

"No, no ! I no understand this 'repose' you talk'em. I no savvy difference these Roman missionaries, Ibadan and Onitcha, these Protestant God-palaver men Gerko, and these other God-men Lokoga. They all different, but they say all same sometime, other time they fight themselves. I savvy what *mallams* tell me in *El Coran*."

I twitted him for being theological. He misunderstood me and thought the word was a bad one, that I was swearing at him. When I had pacified Moman Dal (his official designation) I asked him to tell me what the Mohammedan priests were praying for if they were not praying for the repose of the souls of those who had fallen in battle.

"I no be God-palaver man," he said to me with burning sincerity. "But I got something you call'em Soul—all man gottem—God he gave'm and no man take away. No man see'em. Bushmen Gwari an' Munchi gottem, Suriki gottem, you gottem, me gottem, *Suriki* (King) England gottem, German in Cameroon gottem, even French frog he gottem. Only very bad man he not gottem. God give him but he no want say he gottem 'cos he no savvy and no like'em ; he be man same *Surikin sarta* (thief). He no got sense. When man die in war his soul go Heaven one time, 'cos to fight be good pass if he fight

for home with sword and spear, what you call 'em iron, eh ? ”

“ Steel,” I corrected.

“ So,” said Moman Dal. “ If he fight and die he got soul and he keep soul. But men which no die in war against white man, they lose their souls, become slaves of white man. They say our country before white man come be good country. After him come he be bad country. We say him that die when he fight white man lose his life, but no lose his soul.”

Now I was understanding. I let Moman Dal speak on.

“ War now be no war. I savvy Maxim-gun kill Fularni five hundred yards, eight hundred yards far away. It no be like Bida go fight Kontagora ; it no be blackman *fadda* (fight), it be white man one-side war. It no good. They make Fularni, they make Hausa man what no die proper, no die in him living self, walk about and do what man say he do. He got no soul now when white man make him do. Country plenty good before white man he come. Man no work too much, he eat, he sleep, he drink, he shoot beefs, he have children, he no have money, he make things, he exchange 'em.”

“ But what about the slave-raiding and slave-trading ? ” I asked.

“ Yes, but slave-raiding no so bad as big battle where white man kill black man long way away. Black man not get come near kill white man. If he come near he die.”

"But," I ventured, "you said it was good to die in battle."

"Yes, if battle must be. But not all time one side only. And white man fight all time among other white man." He looked at me keenly and added: "I go Coronation King Edward in London last year. You see me there?"

I nodded.

"Big white man show me all about wars, pictures of war, flags, drums, guns. I go Aldershot. I go your Woolwich. I see all white privates in red coats. I see Lord Kitchener, soldiers from South African War. I see General Botha. Lord Kitchener fight General Botha. Lord Kitchener he win. Many men die, great many men die. More men die, but lose their souls. *Mallams* pray now. You hear 'em, hark! They say now, let white man no steal soul of Fularni."

"I think," I said, "that you are talking rubbish."

He looked at me almost with sorrow in his eyes as he shook his head in protest. "Me no talk rubbish. Me see and savvy. Me see Lord Roberts and one thousand Indian soldiers in England all ready for white man's war. Fularni *mallams* now pray for souls of Fularni and Hausas what no die, 'cos white man's war it make men slaves badder than Fularni slave-raiders he make here now. Savvy . . .?"

Thirty-three years roll on, and here I sit remembering and realizing. The similarity of the

battlefield of Sokoto and the battlefields of the world, which the Fularni saw, and feared, as an inevitable consequence of their new life under Civilization, is most striking. The setting only is different.

The Fularni rulers did not begin the war, and the slaves had no choice but to follow in the common cause. If the slaves had not done so they would have been killed by their rulers and their henchmen. If they had not done so and they escaped the wrath of their rulers, they thought they would be massacred by the British. Of course, they only "thought" they would be massacred by the white man. And in emergencies of that nature a "thought"—a thought well nourished from other quarters—is sufficient to decide the act or shape the conduct. The world rulers in 1914 did not actually "begin" the Great War. They had done things over which, as the slaves "thought," they had no control. So the war followed—and the "slaves" thought that they were powerless.

The civilized slaves of 1914 and of this present day differ from those Fularni slaves of 1903 only in that whereas the Fularni soldiers really were slaves, the modern civilized soldier has mistaken ideas on the subject of slavery. They, who count for everything in a war, consider themselves to be powerless still. They are slaves to that grotesquely misleading idea. Had the people of Europe to-day the same vision and ideas with regard to the sanctity of the soul as those so-called

uncivilized Fularni people had at the beginning of this perplexing century, they would most certainly refuse to permit the soul-murder on the altar of Mammon.

To the uneducated Hausa the white man's type of warfare is stupid, because the mutual extermination makes victory and defeat synonymous. In the snatch-and-grab race for their country, with the French on one side, the Germans on the other, and the English in the middle, the Fularni never feared the rattle of the Maxim-guns ; what they did fear was Civilization—the educating process of which was called by some people in those far-off days in far-off places “ the white man's burden,” and by other people, more conversant with the consequences, “ the black man's load ! ”

The *mallams* prayed in 1903 on the battlefield of Sokoto, not for the dead, but for the souls of the living. And they prayed in vain. They prayed in vain not because what they prayed for was impossible of attainment, but because it is not possible to worship God and Mammon at the same time. The princes and merchants of the earth destroyed the living souls of millions of men and women during the World War because of their greed and their false gospels. The plain people of the earth must now save their own souls, out of their generosity and common sense. If they do not, worse may befall. War and its beastliness worsen with the advance of civilization. What happened in France's war-shattered

country-side will come to happen in England's green and pleasant land. Unless we alter, there can be no escape, for the air is now the blue field of dishonour. And men, who think themselves slaves, will be called upon to perform murderous atrocities the like of which no man since the world began will ever have been asked to do.

Do you realize what you will be called upon to do? Do you realize that my having to shoot down my own men will become a mere triviality of man's inhumanity to man in comparison with the worse things that are yet to come in the name of Civilization?

Just as the Fularni *mallams* cried out from their minarets for the safety of the souls of men not yet dead—men who had done no harm save face an invading enemy under cruelly impossible conditions—so is Canon "Dick" Sheppard calling out when he asks men and women to sign his Peace pledge :

*"I renounce war and never will I support or sanction another."*

But, unlike the Fularni priests, who had no way out, no solution to offer, here is a way out.

Surely, to ignore it is to await for the knell of doom.



## *Chapter 8*

### STICKERS AND WOBBLERS

THERE were only two kinds of people who came through the World War with a right to look the world unashamedly in the face. They were the front-line fighters, who never shirked, day in and day out, who stuck it to the bitter end of their physical endurance—and the 1500 “Absolutists” of the conscientious objector ilk, who, day in and day out, refused every kind of bribe and Governmental inducement to accept “alternative service” as a means towards two desired ends ; i.e. to save the Government’s embarrassment, and to gain for themselves the opportunity of resting on their oars in calm and secluded waters.

To their eternal honour, the front-liners, mostly the regimental rank and file and their officers, never permitted themselves to harbour a thought about “surrender” throughout their prolonged ordeal ; indeed, they did not dare to, lest they weakened. The “Absolutists” did likewise for conscience’ sake. And each element had its use for England . . . the war-time Absolutists of the firing-line to save their country from disaster during the last war, and the war-time Absolutists

of the No Conscription Fellowship to save their country from the disaster of another war.

From the small remnant band of conscientious Absolutists who suffered for their principles—or for their religion—has grown a considerable army of believers whose one object is the prevention of future wars.

Those members of the Society of Friends who “stood pat” for their religious convictions could have spared themselves much suffering if they had taken advantage of complete exemption on religious grounds. They could have chosen so to desert the Cause and their pacifist comrades of the Absolutist type who were not Quakers and could not, therefore, claim immunity under the cloak of religious belief. To the Quakers, let it be said to their great honour, it appeared not only wrong to fight or to take part in war remotely, but also to make others fight or enlist who shared their conscientious views but did not share their religion or had no religion at all.

This chivalrous abnegation was akin to that demonstrated by the men continuing to the last stand in the firing-line, giving no quarter and expecting none. Nothing was to be gained materially for self, nothing but the supreme knowledge that a pledge was honoured.

Of course, there were Quakers who felt justified in accepting alternative service (as enlisted men or men “deemed to have been enlisted”) with the Friends’ Ambulance at the Front or in other fairly safe or absolutely safe occupations. Actually

in some respects, towards the end of the war, the Friends' Ambulance Corps became in all but name a part of the gigantic war machine.

I think it is important to recall that the Absolutists went to jail, again and again and again, as men "deemed to have been enlisted," for disobeying "lawful" commands. During this cat-and-mouse performance every conceivable kind of inducement, temptation, and privation were used by the Government, through the prison governors, in order to make the objectors surrender or break their will—such as solitary confinement, the withdrawal of and subsequent craving for tobacco, the absence of news from home, the longing for good food and the desire for the fellowship of good company.

There were humour and good cheer among those jail-tried men of stout conscience equal in degree to the spirit displayed by the men in Flanders who, unlike the objectors, were at least well fed. Humour, too, existed, even on the Government side—at least, after the time for bullying and fighting had ended and the "Cease Fire" and "Open Jails" had sounded. The objectors "deemed to have been enlisted" were given the ordinary discharge certificate issued in accordance with the rules laid down for men discharged for ignoring orders or who have suffered the disgrace of imprisonment. Imagine it, across the face of the certificate was printed boldly the stern warning that if the individual named therein attempted to re-enlist without

disclosing the fact of his dismissal he would be liable to imprisonment for two years with hard labour !

Quite recently I saw one of those queer certificates framed and in a place of honour in a Yorkshire home greatly respected in the neighbourhood. The certificate is a source of local interest.

As a soldier I know quite well that it would have been impossible to respond to the Quaker request to extend the immunity of conscience to other war-resisters. Had that been done there would have been no end to objection at a time when every able-bodied man was almost worth his weight in gold for the purposes of war. And as a soldier I could not, at the time, understand why the conscientious objectors were not, one and all, transferred to France, there to be tried in the field and shot for disobedience—a fate that befell others who had volunteered or had been conscripted without a murmur of objection, but who cracked up under the strain of active warfare. I did think that that was an easy way out, a splendid way out !

But would it have been such an easy way out ? Public opinion would not have stood for the wholesale execution of tight-lipped men of principle—as was clearly shown by the following incident.

The “ No Conscription Fellowship ” received news that a large batch of conscientious objectors had been transported to France, there to do rough

work. Refusing orders, they had been tried by Field General court martial and were sentenced to be shot. A Government spokesman in the House of Commons denounced the trial and the proposed shootings at the same time as he revealed the facts of the case. Inquiries were immediately made and Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, had to admit the truth of the charges, but promised that he would use his personal influence to obtain commutation of the sentences. Shortly afterwards, Sir Douglas Haig commuted the sentences to ten years' penal servitude, the sentences to be served in England.

Even in time of war any form of dictatorship is disliked in England. That was a close shave !

The " No Conscription Fellowship " was wonderfully organized. Its headquarters knew where all the prisoners were, despite the fact that the men were transferred time and time again to various parts of the country. It is the fact that at the end of the war the Government had to apply to the Fellowship in several cases for news and information concerning the whereabouts of jailed men who had been lost sight of !

Out of the 20,000-odd " alternative service " men, many served in France in labour corps. Their sordid story is relieved by the tale told of certain representatives of the public who went to France, by official invitation, to see for themselves the happy circumstances in which the " alternative service " men were working. They were

shown not men who were diehard war-resisters, or anything approaching that description, but newly arrived wangers who were only too thankful for a light job out of harm's way ! After all, they were only following the fashion set in high places !

It is difficult not to respect the genuine conscientious objector to war, particularly when one is not unmindful of the fact that the Army, as a whole, certain shore sections of the Royal Navy, and ground sections of the Royal Air Force were crowded out with funk-sticks and time-serving wangers who had dug themselves nicely into safe billets, far from gun-fire and under the comfortable camouflage of uniform.

Remember, only a comparatively small proportion of the officer ranks insisted upon always being in the front-line because in their view it was the only decent place to be in ; and only a comparatively small number of conscientious objectors insisted upon being in their front-line—the jails—for the same urgent reason.

There were many idle, rich, skulking young men in the prime of their life, in all parts of the United Kingdom, who successfully dodged military service and made fortunes or kept their safe jobs, while boys like Crockett were doing the fighting for them. Many of those men were "respected" for doing war-work in luxury and safety, and many of them are big business men and merchant princes to-day. But Crockett was

considered a coward by the same men, even although he was never branded as a coward by his soldier comrades.

We soldiers did not think very much of the pacifists—if we thought of them at all. When we did find real conscience beneath the skin we respected it. Men who were conscientious objectors and were tried by court martial, will often admit that the officers who tried them were “decent” and “fair,” and that their escorts and guards were, as a rule, humane and kindly fellows. Although the soldier on active service disapproved of the “conshy” and classed him with the wangler, he preferred him beyond measure to the profiteers, the financiers, the Fleet Street journalist of military age, the banker and, above all, the man at the base or in training camp in uniform for protection, but who was all the time in a blue funk lest he be combed out to fight.

I know this for certain : it was difficult to kill Crockett and no less difficult to turn one’s revolver or Lewis-gun on one’s friends in order to save the situation, but never would it have been difficult to obtain an abundance of volunteers for firing parties for the execution of profiteers and “dodgers.”

Questions of conscience only arise among serving soldiers when they are up against questions of right and wrong. The military machine, apart from the Army Act, is not very much concerned with the difference between right and wrong when

to do the right thing would be to jeopardize the whole machine. Therefore, an army council or committee is more apt to do the wrong thing in bolstering up a wrong in order to get the military machine or the Government out of a hole. That explains a great deal.

If a conscientious objector has even once consented to obey military order, after he has been "deemed to be enlisted," his whole case goes by the board. If he gets near the front-line or is deploying for action with others—perhaps with a rifle on his shoulder and a bayonet fixed—he has no case whatever when he declares: "I cannot kill—I refuse to fight." In such an emergency he would be obviously, and correctly, liable to trial by Field-General court martial for cowardice. Most probably he would be shot by order of the court, if he were permitted to survive long enough to face that process of military justice. More than likely he would be shot out of hand by some responsible officer, because, however desirable it may be to have each case tried on its merits, conduct such as I have described is most deadly in the face of the enemy. Let one man get away with such conduct and a panic might ensue. The only right thing to do is to stop such a threat to the line—even although it may be achieved in a legally "wrong" manner!

I recall one case, the only case in fact that came to my notice, of a man who had protested against conscription and had appealed to a



tribunal on account of conscience only to be compelled eventually to submit to the military machine. He did not refuse to fight when actually deploying for battle, and so escaped the danger of being shot out of hand by a junior officer. Fortunately for him he stated his case to his colonel, who reported it to me verbally on account of its unusual nature.

It was at the time when we were turning British men into first-class fighting soldiers in a very brief space of time—men who had been combed out from labour companies and the like, or from the Royal Army Service Corps, or from “cushy” jobs at the various headquarters farther down the line. Probably this fellow, although a conscientious objector—how far a genuine one, I cannot say—had escaped bullets and had escaped the risk of running a bayonet into an opponent for whom he had no hatred, because of the fact that he had been fortunate enough to get a very safe “war-time” job in the entourage of a civilian magnate of some repute who had donned a general’s brass hat “for the duration.” Or probably he had been employed in a clerical capacity tabulating tombstones or counting salvage dumps or something of that sort.

I took the matter in hand myself. I saw the fellow and I explained to him that so far as we were concerned we admitted no such thing as conscience in the matter of military killing during war. I explained the whole thing to him patiently and firmly, and I advised him to pocket his

conscience for the duration of hostilities and to do his best and carry on.

What I really thought was that he had the wind up ; but I knew only too well that I had had the wind up myself at times and had to carry on just the same.

I told him the story of an officer of my battalion who had flagrantly disobeyed my orders in the middle of the hectic battle of the Somme on the night of July 1st, 1916. This officer had gone back to a snug billet instead of going up to his company when ordered by me. After the battle he was found asleep and in safety. But he escaped being tried for cowardice and desertion because all the evidence, except my own, which would certainly have convicted him, had been wiped out by enemy fire. The officer was called upon to resign his commission ; he did so, but he avoided being enlisted as a private because he was an Ulster Irishman.

At the time I related his history to the conscientious objector, the ex-officer was busily engaged in profiteering back in Ireland. I explained to the fellow the circumstances of disrepute surrounding the ex-officer, but I also pointed out to him that if he refused to go into action it was most unlikely that he would be given the chance of a court martial, that in all probability he would be taken into action whether he liked it or not and would be shot out of hand by his own side and not by the enemy. I told him that I supposed it did not really matter

how a man went out, by what means, but that what did matter was the manner. I told him that he would *go* out with dishonour if he disobeyed, and that he might *come* out with honour if he obeyed, and that if he did die doing his duty he would certainly go out with honour.

He seemed very shaken. I gave him a drink—a tot of rum—to buck him up, and a cigarette, and suggested that he go outside for five minutes and think things over.

He went. And when he came back he said he would do his best to stifle his state of mind, his conscientious scruples. I said that that was a bargain and that, so far as I was concerned, it was also the end of the matter. I wished him luck, and I told him that I was certain he would put up a good show.

The following day he was killed by machine-gun fire during the advance. He fell into some thick scrub—the whole country-side was very scrubby and intersected by old trenches, both German and British—and as we were in a hurry and had reached a state of open fighting for a brief period, he was reported missing. His body was never found. At least, not so far as I am aware. But—who knows? Perhaps he now lies in Westminster Abbey under the proud stone of the Unknown Warrior.

When I said that there is no room for conscience in battle or in war I did not mean to suggest that a man does not get the benefit of the doubt at trial—if he comes to trial. What I do mean is

that, in so far as the safety of the line is concerned, necessity knows no law. I am afraid that governments and officials sometimes borrow that expression "necessity knows no law" from the vocabulary of the fighting men, when they know little about its grim origin ; and they use it to suit their own ends in different circumstances.

So far as conscientious objectors are concerned, it might be as well for people to be forewarned that they will require to make up their minds well in advance as to what their attitude is going to be in the event of another war bursting upon us. If they have not thought it over and registered some proof of their attitude before the " Fall In " sounds, they will have mighty little opportunity of doing so afterwards. Of course, on the other hand, if there is another war it will be on an entirely different scale from the last ; it may not matter very much what individuals do or do not do, or what conscientious objectors think or do not think, for a defective gas-mask will be of little use to a stalwart conscience.

If this next war, about which so much is being talked and written in a spirit of inevitability, does engulf us, it is expected that all subjects and things will be " deemed to be conscripted." The front line will not be held at all costs by the few, because the majority will be exposed to destruction from the heavens in a " front line " that will extend as far as the uttermost boundaries of the belligerent countries. If there is time—and I doubt it—for the expression of conscience, the

jails will be far too few to hold the immense number of war-resisters who exist to-day because of that small band of Absolutists who behaved more gallantly during the last war than did many so-called soldiers who escaped ignominy behind their khaki, which they had donned not because of any patriotic urge, but in order to wangle jobs that would keep them safe—safe from shells, abuse, ridicule, and white feathers.

The war days were days of heroism and fine courage ; thousands died a “ death of glory ” in the firing-line—while the jails gave up their heroes of conscience, their dead bodies clothed in prison garb.

I conjure names such as Plunkett, Brown, G. V. Jones, Hone, Muirhead, Corbyn, Starrett, Lamb, Campbell (Sigs) Firth, Haslett, McKee, Martin, Metcalfe, Perryman, Glover, and many others happily with us still, fighting men of the first water, humble, brave, and at all times cheerful. I also remember Kennedy, Andrews, Benzie, Jackman, Gaffikin, Montgomery, Gough, Truman, Nesbitt, Read—alas, no longer with us ; men of the finest steel, no-surrender men in the full sense of the term, never bragging or cruel, always kind.

I remember, on the other side of the scale, giants as great—men bravely indifferent to public jeers and war-time disgrace. I salute them now in full knowledge that in war-time I not only despised them, but could not, had I so wished, been able to bear the cross they chose to carry. A

few of them I am now privileged to know, among them Jimmy Hudson, Runham Brown, Walter Ayles, Percy Bartlett, Maurice Rowntree, Robert Meynell, Fletcher of the Friends, Peet, O. Clark of Darlington. There were fifteen hundred in all, among them Clifford Allen, now a believer in "Collective Security" and a peer of the realm.

Many other people claim the name of true pacifist as "Sanctionists," "Oilers," "Isolationists," and as members of the League of Nations Union and adherents of the idea of Collective Security. But during the war, some staff officers, experts in uniform, artists, engineers, financiers, lawyers, and so on, claimed to be doing their bit in uniform with the "fighting forces," while all the time they were dodging the column or had no need to enter it.

I often think of the men who had to send their fellows to their deaths, knowing full well that they had but a very slender chance of escape; and of the men who imposed cruel sufferings on "Conshies" and sent them to rot in jails.

True, they were victims of that vast military machine—just as I was. I know that I cannot escape a share of the responsibility for the cruelties inflicted on the Absolute War-Resisters who were as brave, in their way, as the men I led or the men I killed.

The front-line officer had, as a rule, the pride of his tradition to strengthen him in his task; and his men, in addition to their native bravery, had his example always before them. The

Absolutists, too, had pride in their tradition to uphold them, the conscious pride of a great religious truth that had persisted for nineteen hundred years and which no amount of suffering would erase from their thoughts.

As a rule, the old Regular officer seldom thought at all. If he did, it was in terms of flags and old school-ties, of family history and regimental honour. I think I can say with safety that from the South African War to the Great War, through various smaller wars, I never thought very deeply at all, except to try to keep my wicket up. Deep thinking in the army was not necessary ; it simply was "not done."

Nowadays I think ! When I hear from the lips of the "Conshies" themselves of how they suffered in silence inside our jails rather than surrender, how they persisted grimly with their "backs to the wall," I can only marvel at their heroism, at their strength of mind to have withstood the martyrdom and come out of it sane. And in my thinking there is no escape for me from the memory of the men I killed, my own men, when panic seized them, under the exhortation that we must keep our "backs to the wall." When I see war widows I wonder if any of their husbands had been sent to their deaths by me. I feel I want to hide as self-accusation invades me, and sometimes I think that they are thinking : "Butcher !"

Is that silly ? Perhaps in the circumstances it is. I *was* responsible for many deaths, but, then,

I was only a tool in a complex machine which did not slow down to give one time to think things out—a machine that not only destroyed men, but killed the souls of living men, many of them still struggling in our midst.

I remember a front-line fighter—a man who held command—who made a frantic effort to get back to England for the sake of his wife who had depended on him for her fight against drink and drugs. I knew the woman well. Terrified at the thought that her man would be killed, that she would be left to the none-too-tender mercies of her relations, with her children to keep, she succumbed to the old temptations from which her husband had so lovingly protected her, and she went from bad to worse.

I was asked if I could not use my influence to have him released from front-line service. Could I not wangle him home? In a pathetic letter addressed to me the woman appealed to me, for her sake, to let her man go back to England.

What could I do? What was my choice? On the one hand was a fake move to get the husband to safety—on the other was the mental and physical destruction of the wife.

I chose the only course open to me as a soldier. "Fight on!" I muttered with a curse, and, with an outward display of callousness that belied my inward misgivings, I tore the letter into shreds.

A few days later, with the line deployed and



in advance and me in my command post awaiting results, I received a wire from England. It read : " Please send my husband to me, urgent, and tell him to send money. I am in trouble."

The husband was busy doing his duty.

Now, many officers carried a cheque-book in battle, in case they should be taken prisoner, in which event a cheque cashed on Cox & Co., in Germany, would find its way back, via Switzerland, and so give, very often, the first news that a missing man was alive. Writing a cheque in my dug-out—an old German trench—I put it in an envelope, addressed it to the woman, and gave it to the orderly for posting to England. It was all I could do.

The woman never saw her husband again. I number her among the war casualties—among the women we killed in order that England might survive.

When I tore that letter of hers and hid my feelings by forcing a curse between my teeth, I was acting in much the same manner as a governor of a county jail, a man of my acquaintance, who sent a conscientious objector to solitary confinement and bread-and-water diet for refusing to sign an agreement accepting alternative service in lieu of imprisonment.

Oh, yes, we did things in time of war. Few people are aware of the amazing lengths which prison governors were ordered to go to coerce the Absolutists into retracting and taking even unimportant national work.

I know a man who was court-martialled five times, but refused to give in. He was alternately starved and over-fed, moved from place to place and kept quiescent, subjected to harsh restrictions and given every indulgence, put on parole in an unlocked cell and then put in locked confinement, told to sign documents of release and surrender without giving him warning or time to consider, and then paraded to the House of Lords Tribunal of Appeal without request, there to be tempted by three elderly and patriotic gentlemen in severe and immaculate black coats.

But he refused to surrender to the will of others.

From what I have heard from conscientious objectors who were in prison for their principles, they were more fairly treated in the civil prisons to which they were often transferred than in the military prisons where they were incarcerated at the outset. But, strangely enough, when they were held in regimental guard-rooms awaiting court martial they usually had a fairly decent time.

Soldiers, as a rule, make every effort to avoid the infliction of pain or injury on others. When they are compelled to do so, from the stern dictates of duty, they try to do so with as much humanity as is conceivably possible in the circumstances. I am afraid that the same cannot be said of the local and civilian petty grandees whose patriotic blood is on boil, and whose

minds are fired with the flames of subtle propaganda. The British court martial, in the view of many of the war-resisters with whom I have talked, was the fairest tribunal of justice one could choose to appear before. But the tribunals of exemption and appeal—composed mostly of civilians immune from the dangers and horrors of war—could by no means be so described !

In the next time of war the conscientious objectors will probably be shot. If not, there is little doubt but that they will be treated with a greater severity and harshness than was their lot during 1914-1918.

Young men who to-day earnestly believe that they can see the dawn of a new world at the end of the road the pacifist follows, must bear in mind the reality of the fact that once war breaks out they will be subject to a military inquisition the nature of which we have not ever known. They will be bombed and gassed by the enemy, insulted, tortured, and slain by their own, war-maddened, countrymen. The hostilities will be of a short duration, but so also will be the government's tolerance of their defiance.

They, the true pacifists of to-day, are the descendants and comrades of that hardy band of war-resisters who suffered and survived eighteen years ago. They owe much of the growing strength of their movement to the pioneer martyrs who emerged from their dark Gethsemane to the new peace with heads up and hearts and minds intact—just as the true fighting

men of the army marched through London on the Peace March of 1919.

Of course, I know that there are many sham pacifists in the ranks. But, then, there were many sham fighters in that hotch-potch, make-shift Peace March. Fortunately, I was able to select first-class fighting men to follow me in that parade. But the scandal of it was that the ranks included war-time clerks, Donga Dicks (as they were called in the Boer War), and Dug-out Duds (as they were labelled in the last war), who sloped down Whitehall with their rifles—no, not their rifles, other men's rifles, other men who ought to have been there—at the wrong angle and their hearts beating in the wrong place, to receive the grateful applause of a gullible nation. Once more, alas, were men deceived.

As the preparations for war proceed apace and panic already invades the minds of our leaders, I am afraid that everything points to the fact that in the next war there will be little opportunity for the honest pacifists, the out-and-out Absolutists, to emerge with their spirits unbroken. The machine will not permit them to survive so long as that. . . . Not unless the pacifist army is mightier than the machine.

There is no hope of that at the moment. For, although the war-resisters are greater in number than they were in 1914, they are still all too few in number compared with the ranks of those who, while possibly professing to hate war, will be whipped into passions of hatred and

blood-lust when the next calamity massacres reason.

We must not wait until the next war comes. The task of the pacifist to-day is to do everything humanly possible in his power to prevent that next war coming.

Pacifism is a personal affair—as is all true service of any kind. As such it cannot be a suitable “platform” on which to form a political party. It is encountered in every party, although it is a matter for regret that it is so sparsely represented in the Conservative party. This, perhaps, is understandable when it is remembered that wars are waged for the protection of vested interests—even if they are attributed to higher motives. Many easy-going Conservatives, who have never had to do much thinking for themselves or who have it done for them by their favourite biassed newspaper, have never troubled to get to the truth of these matters. The same type was found in the army to make not such a good officer as the fellow who was always up against it, who had to think and strive on his own initiative—the colonial, for instance.

From conversations I have had—and arguments, too—I find that if the pacifist element in politics should manage to obtain a majority in the House of Commons, on the lines of the anti-slavery agitation, there is a danger of their enthusiasm enforcing complete disarmament in one fell swoop. As an old soldier I would point

out the inevitable danger of such a clumsy, tactical error.

The officers of the Army, Navy, and Royal Air Force would immediately be ranged together against pacifist democracy. With the aid of the fox-hunters and the "shootin'" people, the Church, and the armament manufacturers, they would immediately plan a *coup d'état*, the result of which would be civil war of the bloodiest, with Fascism or Anarchism resulting in the end. What a horrible finalé to a campaign of peace!

The proper course would be the gradual education of the officers in the various services—including the Civil Service—in the rudiments of Constructive Pacifism and the ideals it embraces. Through the departments of local government, the instruction of the people—the masses and the classes—could be carried out—just as is now being done in the false cause of "Defence" against air invasion. How much nobler the inculcation of true pacifism than this present-day hot-gossiping for a false security.

"Collective Security," in the real and truest sense of that much-libelled and much-misused phrase, is the only way out—the combining of the people of the nations with the peoples of other nations in a truly pacifist outlook. This is a sane, common-sense ideal to work for. There is no room for the crank or the fanatic.

"Treachery!" shout the blind and the unbelievers.

Is it? Is it as treacherous as the gospel of

rearmament, the jealous fears of militaristic governments, the provision of unsafe gas-masks, the wicked propaganda designed to promote a feeling of false security among millions of men, women, and children whose mortal fate is in the hands of a few misguided individuals ?

Treachery !

## Chapter 9

### POSTSCRIPT TO TREASON

I AM no Christian pacifist. Mine has been a life lived far below that high moral and spiritual standard demanded from the man who is worthy of such a name. I envy the man whose religious faith is so strong that it illuminates all his existence. His path may be a difficult one—but for him it is not confused.

The idea came to me to “fall in” in the pacifist ranks when it became apparent to me, after years of fighting, that “the game was up.” And, thank God, I have joined the army of peace with that same spirit that took me, in the wars of my time, into the firing-line and not to the bases or on the staffs. That spirit used to be called “good soldiering.”

After the last war, when I wrote a book called *A Brass Hat in No-Man's-Land*, I realized that whereas we soldiers used to be able to fight for victory, to suffer and to die for it, we were no longer enabled to find strength or reason in such an ideal. For there is no longer such a thing as victory in war. Both sides must lose. There is nothing to be won in warfare, no lasting good—



nothing but senseless slaughter, the massacre of combatants and innocents, the spread of hate and misery and a legacy of turmoil and disruption, not only for the opposing nations but for the whole wide world as well.

To-day, the pacifist ex-Servicemen far outnumber the original war-resisters. They have arrived at the truth by a more tortuous route and have suffered sorely for their convictions. The nature of their warrior experiences is the measure of their pacifist sincerity to-day. They, too, like the Absolutists, were martyred for their principles which were so antithetical to those of the conscientious objectors.

The two types of pacifists are now one in purpose ; they form a mighty band of opinion in this country, even if at times their views do not always coincide as do their ultimate ideal.

Not long ago a pacifist objected to me because " God Save the King " was sung before a meeting in which I took part. He said he disliked the words. I said that they might possibly be improved. He said he disliked the tune. I liked it. He said it reminded him of bad days and bad deeds. I replied that it reminded me of good days and good deeds. A hopeless impasse !

Finally I said to him : " I think you dislike the King. Has he ever done you any harm ? " The objector retorted that what he did dislike were " trappings." To which I retorted : " I don't suppose the King has any more love of trappings than you have. I don't think he

enjoys getting in and out of full-dress uniform, any more than an ordinary soldier does."

"But what good does it do to pray for the saving of a king?" he demanded, ignoring, of course, the elementary fact that the words are a symbolism and that the King, as a figurehead, represents a united nation. My pacifism—which is urgent and demands the prevention of this next war that threatens now—desires the protection of the King, his Crown, and his family, for I know that the Crown will cease to exist after the next great betrayal of the nation.

I asked my "opponent" if he stood up at a cinema when the National Anthem was played. He hastily assured me that he did nothing of the kind, that he invariably marched out as quickly as he could.

"But why don't you just sit still?" I invited.

The reply came pat. "Do you want me to be killed?"

I laughed. I said that I didn't want him to be killed or anybody else to be killed. I added that I would like to take him to a cinema one day . . . and then to hospital afterwards.

"And you," exclaimed the astonished man, "call yourself a pacifist!"

Of course I do. And I hope I shall prove to be as good a pacifist as he desires to be. I am not a non-resister. I am a war-resister, trying to find a way of preventing another great war which can prove to be nothing but disastrous to both sides. As I have already mentioned, the

danger to pacifism, as it is to other movements, is fanaticism. During the war the fanatic was a peril. In the fighting lines certain acts of common sense used to be fanatically condemned as acts of cowardice or loss of nerve, when a rational appreciation of the realities of the facts would have revealed the obvious truth.

Well do I remember the case of a little Welshman who was accused of cowardice in allegedly abandoning his post. I read the papers applying for his trial by court martial on a capital charge, and I will never forget the look of blank amazement on the Welshman's face when I tore up the papers and went to see his Colonel.

The Colonel had become sheerly fanatical in the matter of holding inches of the front-line at all costs, no matter what the circumstances were. In this particular case a sudden and previously unregistered bombardment had come down on a small post, in the front-line, in command of which was the little Welshman. Had he and his men stayed there they would surely have been blown to bits with their portion of the trench, which was doomed. Very wisely, he retired to a support-trench with his men, fifty yards away, and waited there until the "hate" had finished. Then he went back to his original position and immediately started to rebuild it.

What this Welshman was suffering from was not cowardice, but cool, common sense. His was not a crime; it was a virtue deplorably lacking during war-time in many of those

engaged in winning a war far distant from the firing-line. His war-winning was a personal affair.

So is pacifism. But if pacifism calls for disloyalty to the Crown, then I, who have learned my lesson from good soldiering, must decline to co-operate with this official brand of pacifism while remaining a true pacifist, or war-resister, at heart.

Our imperial sins, which have by no means been few and which have led to many wars, were not at the instigation of the Crown. They are the sins of Ministers of the Crown, prompted by party demands or the avarice and jealousy of vested interests.

We cannot afford to be fanatical about peace. Our clear duty is to be calm and reasonable.

There is room for everyone in the pacifist movement, but it is unreasonable to expect everyone to submit to a list of signed rules of conduct ; to embrace every tenet of the doctrine, when conscientiously some of the rules do not conform to one's individual outlook and can never be reconciled. Why should a person, upon deciding to join a peace society because he or she thinks it is the right thing to do for the good of the country—and for the world—be immediately pounced upon and placed into a pacifist straight-jacket of restrictive rules ?

There is too much of this sort of thing being done in the name of peace. We can still be individuals while striving together for a common

purpose. The principle of an all-embracing non-violence, as described by Richard Gregg, is not affected by this attitude. Those who are prepared to practise it because they strenuously believe in it are at perfect liberty to do so. But to shun, reject, or ex-communicate pacifists who are not prepared to go so far as that is to do nothing but harm to the pacifist cause.

I think—being mindful of the sufferings, the killings, that will be in store for pacifists in the next war—that many professing war-resisters will have to be prepared to take as their motto that found on Japanese battleships : “ Death is as light as a feather ; duty is as heavy as a mountain.”

They will require it, as a prayer for strength in the tribulations of their persecution.

“ But,” you say, “ you can never abolish war.” Very many people say that.

Voltaire wrote two hundred years ago : “ I wholly disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.” While I wholly disagree with what *you* say, I am not prepared, as you expect me, to “ defend ” your right to say it, when that defence must necessarily consist of gas-masks, gas-proof (alleged) shelters, and every other device wickedly offered as a means of protection against modern aerial attacks, when every sane-thinking man and woman knows that there is no protection. It certainly is “ defence to the death.”

It is criminal folly, in this age of science, for

any government to suggest that a superiority in armaments will ensure security for this or any other government. It is as stupid as the assertion that two and two make five. Also, while it may be true that a heavily-armed nation may for a time remain at peace with another heavily-armed nation, it cannot be forgotten that that peace is a military peace and as such is no real peace at all. The clash is inevitable, and when it does come the bloodshed and destruction will be all the greater for the very reason that so much military "frightfulness" is in existence.

Nations armed to the teeth as a protection against each other surely cannot be said to be friendly. If there is no friendship, then how can there be such a thing as peace? And if there is no peace, how then can it be said that the only way to avert war is to be prepared for it?

What wicked folly! Responsible government of the people condones such folly—indeed, promotes it—because all forms of government are supported by armed force, and all so-called governed people are the victims of a military slavery.

The armed forces raised for the protection of modern governments inevitably are used for attack against other governments, contrary to the wishes of the people themselves; which means that that force is in existence for use against the people who desire only peace.

It is a gross betrayal. The ordinary people, the great preponderating masses of people who

are supposed to be represented by their governments, have no desire to be killing each other. Travel, sport, the arts, all have contributed towards a growing friendliness amongst the peoples of different nations, a friendliness which, if left to develop by the militarists, the financiers, the economic exploiters, and the propaganda of political fanatics, would in the end lead to that unarmed peace at which the sceptics so foolishly scoff.

A great trick illusion is being practised by rulers, by state leaders, and vested interests, with the sanction of the Christian churches, and it is being perpetrated on us plain folk. Many of us, alas, are thus hypnotized and are tied in the chains of military slavery.

“Government” has come to mean a ruling organization maintained by and dependent upon “force.” We admit that “force” is evil. Therefore, “government” is evil.

To say this, is not to suggest that a system of co-ordinated welfare—judicial and social—is undesirable, or impossible. “Welfare” means “for the good of.” But armed government can never be for the good of a nation.

“You want the anarchists to reign,” retorts the landowner. “You want the poor to steal our wealth,” exclaims the banker and the merchant. “You want slavery,” rages the politician.

Rubbish !

My reply to the landowner is : “I want the people to live happily with love and justice in

their hearts.” To the banker and the merchant : “ I don’t want the *rich* to steal from the poor as they do now.” To the politician : “ Far from making them slaves, I want to free the people from the military slavery which now shackles them.”

Peace is a personal affair and cannot be left to the tender mercies of governments or coteries. Each one of us desiring peace must work for it unremittingly. It begins in the home, by your own hearthside—and it ends there. It begins in the homes of the people in all nations. The vast majority of people crave for peace. But they leave it to others to ensure it ; or else they regard it as some mystic unattainable, and regret that such an ideal while eminently desirable is hopelessly impracticable.

A senior regular officer who rendered distinguished service during the last war and received grievous, and permanent, hurts, recently wrote to me. In his letter he said :

“ I am a coward ; that is to say, I cannot claim to be one of your 100 per cent pacifists. The only hope for peace lies in justice and that some sort of force must be placed at the service of justice. I trust that we may be able to dispense with force later on, but surely we have much work to do yet. I admire Dr. Sheppard greatly, and wish you the best of luck.”

This distinguished officer craves earnestly for peace—peace for his family, for his home, for his country, for the world. But—“ force must be



placed at the service of justice." Force to do what? To use it against the peace-breaker ; "collectively" to bomb the mothers and babies of a country whose transgressing rulers go scot-free ; to slaughter and maim the innocent lovers of peace !

Tell me, please, does that sound like justice ?

War is murder, whether it is euphemistically termed "collective security," "defence," or "international policing." That changes neither the methods nor the effects. While many will suffer, it will be left to the comparatively few to wage, and it will always be the "patriotic duty" of a handful of misjudged men to commit deeds of murder, as I had to do, by shooting down their own men in order that the line will be held, that the cause will be won. Won !—when never again can there be such a thing as victory from warfare.

I know that I, for one, will do my utmost to make it impossible for "just" murders to be committed as they were on the Strazeel road, or in the streets of Dublin . . . killings in the name of Justice, by that Force which this type of governmental justice depends upon for its miserable existence.

The road to True Peace may be a long and a difficult one. It will entail much personal sacrifice for those who are prepared courageously to take their stand together and say "NO MORE WAR !" If only every grown man and woman would play his and her part by refusing to be

slaves of the military machine built and operated by governments, by refusing to be deluded by the trickery behind all the smug respectability and the humbug of prayers-for-peace allied with rearming-for-the-defence-of-peace ; if only I and my neighbour, you and your neighbour, could enlist in the army of Pacifism two new helpers, who would in their turn enlist two other helpers, each dedicated to enrol new recruits, there would be created such a body of opinion and resolute determination that the treachery in our midst would be unmasked and banished for ever. It is a common cause shared by the common people in every other nation, even where dictators reign in their temporary power.

The flag of patriotism has been trailed in dishonour. Let the white flag of peace be raised by every man, the flag of the Kingdom of God which is within us. Only then will True Peace be achieved ; then and only then will men be able to hold their heads high and with pride confidently affirm : " This is my world, in which I can now work out my own salvation unmolested."

Almost a hundred years ago there was in existence a Society for the Establishment of Peace. Unfortunately it was short-lived : the world was not ready for such a movement. In its declaration of faith appeared the following words :

" We cannot acknowledge allegiance to any human government. . . . We recognize but one

King and Lawgiver, one Judge and Ruler of mankind. . . . Our country is the world, our countrymen are all mankind. . . . Hence we can allow no appeal to patriotism to revenge any national insult or injury. . . . We regard as un-Christian and wrong not only war itself, whether offensive or defensive, but all preparations for war : the building of any naval ship, any arsenal, or any fortification : we regard as un-Christian and wrong the existence of any standing army, all military chieftains or soldiers, all monuments commemorative of victory over a fallen foe, all trophies won in battle, all celebrations in honour of military exploits, all annexations acquired by armed force ; and we regard as un-Christian and wrong every edict of government requiring military service of its subjects . . .”

So, you may be inclined to say, absolute pacifism has been tried out long ago and has not cured the world of wars !

But we have known of Christianity for almost two thousand years and the world has not yet been cured of sin. Neither Christianity nor its lesser gospel of pacifism has been tried yet. That, however, does not affect their truths.

The words of that declaration of faith may be too much for pacifists like myself, just as a practical acceptance of Christian-living may be beyond most of us. But does that prevent us at least striving to walk along the straight road as far as our human frailties will take us ? We will be in good company, marching towards a

glorious dawn, and following, however stumbling our gait may be, the way of the greatest Pacifist of all, Jesus Christ.

The choice is simple. The issue is narrowed down to a choice between totalitarian warfare, which means the end of civilization—and personal victory, which means peace.

Which way will you decide to go?

The cause of pacifism in the past was ennobled and strengthened by those who “can’t fight and won’t.” The future of all our living is in the hands of those who “can fight and don’t.”

## *Chapter 10*

### MILITARY RELIGION

THE person who calls himself, or herself, a realist will probably maintain that the Declaration of Peace referred to in the previous chapter is based on supernatural nonsense which cannot be reconciled with the needs of this material world. The same kind of person will probably maintain that the blame for killing is to be handed out to a set of circumstances instead of a set of people. Of course, circumstances dictate events, so it is as well to examine "circumstances" if blame is to be attached or similar mistakes avoided. Something, or some person, must be initially responsible for any circumstances apart from those events which occasionally cause havoc or strike terror in the hearts of men and women and are known as Acts of God. War, however, cannot be so described by any stretch of imagination.

Some people believe that war will only be abolished when people become "good" and that the real approach to the avoidance of war is to make people "better." I cannot hold with this idea at all, because the vast majority of the people with whom I have been associated during

fourteen wars, expeditions, revolts, and campaigns, have been by no manner of means "bad" people, nor have they been lacking in those attributes which go to make the most pleasant people in times of so-called peace. One must look farther than that. The reason is not lying on the landscape.

I have been associated with soldiering ever since I was born. I love soldiering ; but I know that the days of soldiers are over. Now, almost the first, if not *the* first, military ceremony I can recall was that of the consecration of colours by a Church dignitary. Military religion is a thrilling religion. It acts like magic and is as mysterious as the Ju-Ju of the African bush. Fine feathers, sacramental words, colourful rites, deep-seated and religious patriotism, clean buttons and pipe clay, hymns of hate and anthems of arrogance—all these things are the paraphernalia, the essential trappings, of military religion. Kipling should have been an Archbishop, welding the Empire with his words and painting the map red with his brush. (I nearly said "blush," but Kipling never blushed !)

Almost the first military event I can recall was the entrainment of my father's regiment in Southern India, for the "front" in Burma, where a war was being waged in the name of God, and for the protection of the people, in order that Queen Victoria might annexe the Burmese to her Indian Empire.

Now, my father was a regular church-goer

who would never go to church with troops because he disliked the idea of dressing up in what he called "peacocks' feathers" to say his prayers. The ordinary person who does not think much about these things fails to realize that the State has appropriated religion to its own use, has collared it for its own purpose, and has distorted it to fit worldly affairs with neither qualm of conscience nor fret of soul. States have neither soul nor conscience. Thus we have the Chaplain General, a military officer of high rank in the service of the State; and the Archbishop of Canterbury, chief officer of the State Church, whether it be opposed to God and Christ or merely nebulous in its attitude.

Strange things are done in the name of God, and God is put to strange uses. Military force adopts Him as its Protector and Inspiration, and so every military campaign becomes a justifiable war, a war of right, with God popularly elected to the side of self-described "justice." Rebels, too, cling to God in order to bolster up their causes. General Franco is repeating the military formula and sham-religious masquerade—just as the Ulster Volunteers, a rebel force to which I belonged in 1914, regularly caused its followers to be mesmerized by bishops.

When my father's regiment left for the front the colours were not taken to the war, because we had learned from the Zulu War and the 1881 Boer War that colours were dangerous in combat,

that they drew fire and were often lost, with disgrace to the Empire. Remember, colours are solemnly consecrated and form part of the business of military religion. Instead of being taken to the fighting line where their supernaturally-endowed power would, one would think, inspire the troops to deeds of great daring and valour and victorious combat, they are placed in some distant cathedral or church for safe custody.

But why in a church ? The Pall Mall depository or a London tube tunnel would now seem to be safer. In a church, mark you ! They are placed there because a church is the House of God, Father of the "Saviour" who is always on the side of the fighters, no matter their object or their nationality. Colours are no longer capable of inspiring resistance against long-range and often well-aimed artillery fire, nor against bomb-dropping and fire-explosives and poison gas. Churches and cathedrals in which colours are hung in war-time are no longer safe from hostile action, or are they gas-proof when panic-stricken people rush to the altar for protection from the aerial invaders and their frightfulness. I have in mind a little French village, the whole Christian population of which congregated in a chapel, there to be annihilated from above—and a Moslem mosque in Africa, where over one thousand "rebel" enemies of an English King, hoping for liberty and safety as adherents of the Prophet, were mown down by machine-gun fire



from the entrance to the mosque, in cold blood. And I am not forgetting the fate of the Christian Abyssinians at Addis Ababa a few months ago at the hands of the Italian Fascist invaders, or of the shameful exhibition of man's insane inhumanity to man when the worshippers in an ancient House of God in the Basque capital of Guernica were destroyed pitilessly by bomb, flame, and machine-gun bullet.

O, military religion, great is thy name and thy power, when the enemy can be induced to fly to their altars for protection and so, in congregation, make their destruction simpler by the warriors whose flags are consecrated and whose deeds are performed in the Name of the Almighty !

In God's name, what do our church leaders think of such things ? If they be men of conscience why cannot they cry out against such devilishness and call the world to follow the way of Christ to true peace on earth ?

I have already referred to the activities of chaplains attached to troops in time of war. I have paid tribute to their manly qualities and virtues and the help they have afforded in ameliorating conditions, but has the time not come for those chaplains to ask themselves how they stand in regard to their faith ?

It is possible that when they are in uniform, on the battle-field, they find that they can be of real help to the individual. I know that to be a fact, and I, and countless others, have been grateful for the presence of these men. But what do they

think of a system of military religion that makes it necessary for them to leave their pulpits and go to a No-Man's-Land of death and carnage to be with their dying brothers, and to see men being massacred on one side in the name of God, and being massacred on the other side, also in the name of God. What a terrible affront to Christ !

It is also possible—and highly probable—that the parsons who stay at home in time of war are of less benefit to humanity than they are to the State because, when war breaks out, the pulpit is transformed immediately into a recruiting platform of the subtlest kind. And this kind of military ritual goes on on both sides of No-Man's-Land to the accompaniment of the same hymns of hate and self-glory. Unfortunately the hymns of hate do not stop when hostilities cease, but go on for years during the so-called peace, even until the next war.

Tell me, how is it possible for a man of conscience, a man of declared Christian principles and a follower of Christ, to uphold military religion in its attempt to reconcile Christ and the Devil ? That, baldly, is what it means. Try to explain it otherwise !

The Angels of Mons were popularly supposed to have saved the British Army during that retreat. I never saw them myself ; but once, during the Boer War, I thought I saw a mystical apparition under the moon while I was on outpost duty. It might have been anything,

according to the condition of the mind of the observer at the time. I was in no religious mood, so I fired, alarming the whole camp and receiving a reprimand from my colonel for interfering with his sleep. The apparition proved to be a white donkey ! I am not at all certain that I was not the whiter donkey ; neither am I now convinced that all the white armies bred on the military brand of Christianity that makes all wars “ just ” wars and can make the Gospels fit the demands of the times, have not contained more white donkeys in their day than existed in Ireland in the days of my youth !

When I first joined the Army I served under an excellent and “ religious ” colonel—as nice and as good a fellow as one could ever wish to meet. Of church parade he used to say that he did not care a damn how many officers put their names in the leave-book in order to obtain permission to be absent from church parade, so long as they stayed away and did not hang around in mufti, and provided that there was one officer for each company on parade, to inspect the men . . . because, as he explained, it was only on Sundays that he had an opportunity of seeing his men parade “ as strong as possible,” in full dress, and that but for these parades the men would get so slack about keeping themselves spruce and clean that there would be no end of trouble when they were required on parade for a full-dress function !

I am referring in detail to this humbug of

military religion because the institution of a State, or Established, Church in England is a danger to world peace, for the simple reason that the State is bound to war for its existence. There are very many clergymen in the Church of England to-day who, having experienced the horrors and errors of 1914-1918, in which the Christian Churches played such a decisive part, are now agreed on that danger arising from the alliance of Church and Government.

I am not a religious man, but I do realize that it is useless for us to pay lip-service to Christianity and at the same time act as we do while pretending to be the leaders of the organized Christian world on earth. All hypocrisy is bad. There must be a complete divorcement between the Church and State, and official religion must be given back its conscience. State religion to-day permeates, with its insidious doctrines, all the important organizations and functions of our land, corrupting or stultifying.

A friend of mine, vicar of a parish, has helped me to master the intricacies of the doctrines of the Established Church. He has told me quite definitely that the wording of the 37th Article of Religion may be out of date but is intended to cover warfare in a general way, and that the Church exists on expediency as it has to serve the world in which it exists—and that world is not perfect ! To me, that is appalling. Because the world is imperfect our Church must be imperfect—our Church founded by Christ on this earth.

The world is not to be made fit for Christianity, but Christianity—or that hypocrisy masquerading so devilishly under that blessed name—is to be made fit for the world ! Where will it all end ? I ask. Are the clergymen content to paddle along in an imperfect world, sailing with the currents, until miraculously the millennium arrives out of the blue and all will be well for the Sons of God, and Christ will come into his own without our ever having lifted one little finger to help ?

No, no, no ! I cannot believe that good can ever come from that type of compromising religion. It is not Christianity. And it does not appeal to people such as I am, who, realizing our shortcomings, at least expect a high moral code from our church.

Aldous Huxley tells us in a pamphlet : *What Are You Going To Do About It ?* that “ the means determine the ends ”—which may explain the extraordinary utterances of the archbishops and bishops in the recent Church Assembly, in regard to war. If the means do determine the ends then official religion stands a very poor chance of survival, based as it is, according to the majority of the established clergymen, on the Articles of Religion, dated 1562.

There is no doubt about what Christianity really is, and from what Inspiration it comes to us. Whatever the State may do to its own particular brand of religion, the ordinary people who make up the Christian portion of the British

Empire know that the Christianity they were taught at their mother's knees was the true gospel, no matter how tempting, how expedient, the distorted version may be to-day. It is easy to understand, in view of what the Church upholds, how the atheist founds his beliefs on what he calls "realism," and why the agnostic is able to defend his ideas with a perfectly good argument against the utterances of Christian bishops.

To talk of Christ and Christianity is terribly embarrassing to many people who regard the subject as something only for their own private thoughts, and who consider it indecent to discuss it outside of a church—if it is even discussed there! I have never been able to understand that prevailing shortcoming in our national temperament; but what I would understand is if the archbishops and their professional officers were to be confused with embarrassment when the question was raised in their presence. They would have every reason to be so embarrassed that they would want to run away and hide their burning faces in secret shame, there to commune with their conscience, and there to remember what they seemed prepared to forget, that Christ's life was dedicated to making the life of the world conform to Christianity, and not Christianity conform to the life of the world. If they are honest men and good Christians, as they profess to be, how can they ever escape from that great truth?

The lapse from this high level of attainment since the time of Constantine may have made it easier to-day for the archbishops to support a war-like government in the House of Lords. But I am sure that had there been such a place as a House of Lords in Christ's day, He would not have had anything to do with it, far less would He have sat in it and listened to the mockery of tongues.

At the Church Assembly the Bishop of London asked Canon "Dick" Sheppard if he would stand by calmly and see the children at the Bishop's annual party killed by bombers from abroad. The answer to such a question is that whatever might be done to prevent the killing (if anything could be done at all, which is doubtful) one thing certainly would not be done—and that would be for a flight of aeroplanes to go over to Berlin, under Canon Sheppard's direction, and there drop bombs on the Bishop of Berlin's Children's Garden Party in retaliation for the evil perpetrated on the British bishop and his child guests.

For this reason I ask what Our Lord would probably do were He to return to earth to-day to help us. He would never become a soldier—any more than any of His followers would have become soldiers before the time of Constantine. He might conceivably hurry by aeroplane to relieve the suffering in Madrid or help to evacuate the imperilled women and children of stricken Bilbao—BUT He would never hurry in a bomber to hurtle appalling death on Spanish

babies in retaliation for the massacre of the innocents of the Bishop of London's Children's Party by General Franco's air squadrons of death.

Is it necessary to argue that any further? Even the most hypocritical amongst us cannot deny that truth. Yet the only answer to evil which the bishops seem to possess is retaliation by means of like evil. That is what is meant by "Defence." Military reprisals are seldom undertaken by military high command, because they are dangerous and lead to a vicious circle of expanding evil instead of the elimination of that evil.

This book is mostly about the men I killed while endeavouring to carry out the orders of my superiors in accordance with the customs of civilization then in vogue. I hold nobody responsible for the lawless acts I had to commit, but if ever there comes another catastrophe the Church dignitaries of this land will have to bear the responsibility for the humiliation of a younger generation and, it is possible, for the return to barbarism of this country.

It is useless for the Archbishop of Canterbury to recall men and women to religion, when we know the brand of religion he is holding out to us. We know what it has done—and what it will do again. No good will ever be achieved by the Church until its leaders cut the shackles of opportunism that make them merely Civil Servants listening to the sermons of the politicians,



instead of Servants of Christ listening to the Sermon on the Mount.

During the Great War, Dr. Maude Royden put a question to Mr. Lloyd George. "What," she asked, "would you do to me if I preached the Sermon on the Mount against war?"

The answer was that if it interfered with the conduct of the war, with recruiting, or the supply and manufacture of munitions, he would lock her up, under the Defence of the Realm Act!

What does that mean? Simply that, while we were at war with an enemy, we put our military banners in the cathedrals and churches, swore that God was on our side of right and prayed to Him for a mighty victory, and proceeded to lock Christ away in our catacombs of dead conscience—until the war was over.

As a soldier during the war I should have said the same as Mr. Lloyd George, because had I in those days thought about the true Christian belief as first taught me by my mother, I should never have been able to take part in the war at all. The bitter truth is that, although Christ's Sermon on the Mount cut right across Mr. Lloyd George's conduct of the war (for which conduct as war-time pagans we should give thanks), it was not expedient at that time for slack followers of Christ (such as most of us were) to change our ideas and see the truth shining before us. Had we done so we should have been beaten, and that would have been bad for British prestige. But the argument is not the

same to-day. Twenty years have passed ; we have had all that time to find out that the root of our troubles is our wilful departure from Christ's teachings and that we have been clinging to false gods.

Twenty years ! And what have we done ? Nothing !

Patriotism is the root of most evil—not because it is bad to love one's country, but because to love wrongly is to breed arrogance, selfishness, and associated evils. The Established Church is also based on the same type of arrogant patriotism which is now doing such harm in many countries throughout the world. The church militant affords an excellent example of the way in which things go wrong and have been going wrong since the idea was spread abroad that the British Empire was by God ordained, with the aid of British soldiers, the Bible, and "baccy," to cover most of the world with its flags and Christian civilization.

It is said that Christianity follows the big drum. But there are places in the British Empire where Christianity preceded the big drum and actually remained at work in perfect peace, unmolested by the rulers of the countries in which Christianity was an uninvited guest. There is the case of the Hausa States, ruled over by the Fulani and now incorporated in the British Empire under the title of Nigeria. A reconnaissance in force took place from the River Niger into the hinterland of the great

Hausa country in 1900, and there was fighting. A premeditated advance took place, on to Zaria, which was occupied in 1902, a battle being avoided by the sagacity of the late Major Dickinson of the Leinster Regiment, and the late Captain Abadie, to whom there is a military memorial, with the rest of his family—all soldiers—in Canterbury Cathedral. These men departed from precedent—the fetish of military command—and trusting to their lucky stars and a compass they took to the bush and encircled the Zaria Army, coming up against them in an unexpected place without a shot being fired. The result was astounding. The Emir of Zaria realized that something different was happening, something that had never happened before. A frontal attack on him with fixed bayonets and ammunition had not advanced ; instead, Major Dickinson and Captain Abadie rode alone many yards ahead, in front of their men, and shouted a friendly salutation in the Hausa language. The Emir was intrigued, and he went out to confer—with the result that the Zaria province was annexed without one bullet being used. Captain Abadie was appointed the first Resident ; Major Dickinson was awarded the D.S.O. for his military work on the expedition, and Captain Abadie received the C.M.G. for his peaceful political services.

The following year a strong force left Zaria to occupy Kano, four days' march away. From there it diverted across the waterless plain of

Mimosa Thorn to occupy Sokoto. Kano is the commercial capital of the Hausa States, while Sokoto corresponds to our Canterbury and paid tribute to Constantinople. At Kano and Sokoto there was one-sided fighting ; we were heavily armed, with the enemy at our mercy. There was a great display of force in front of Kano and Sokoto.

The curious thing about this annexation was that several years prior to the fall of Kano, and before Northern Nigeria was taken over by the Crown from the Royal Niger Company on January 1st, 1900, a trading mission under the late Sir William Wallace of that company had penetrated to Kano from the River Benue, and from there back to the Niger, without any casualties. They were unarmed !

Of course, Sir William Wallace went to Kano to buy concessions at a time when the scramble for Africa was taking place, and when the French were hedging us in to the north near Lake Chad and were actually in possession of certain portions of Borgu on the right bank of the Niger. It was no uncommon thing to see the British Union Jack and the French Tricolour flying at opposite ends of small native villages at the same time ! The marvel is that there was not a European war over this business, because at that time we were just about to embark on the South African campaign and were about to incur terrible losses at the hands of the Boer farmers—a fact that pleased the French greatly, for at that

date in history they hated the very sight of us and were never tired of publishing disrespectful cartoons of Queen Victoria in their newspapers. But—five years later, when it suited the French—owing to the German menace—they were only too glad to hob-nob with us and were grateful for our protection. (It is incidents like that which make me suspicious of allies and all that such political associations can mean to the ordinary man and woman.)

More curious than the peaceful penetration of Sir William Wallace to Kano for the sake of trade—he kissed the hem of the garment of the Emir, much to the annoyance of many of the sabre-rattling soldiers farther south—was the Christian penetration of the Church Missionary Society to Gerko, just south of Zaria. The mission established itself there prior to the occupation of Zaria and at about the same time that the original reconnaissance took place in 1900 when fighting took place. The Christian missionaries at Gerko were never molested, and they did a great deal of good by healing the sick—which goes to show that it is not actual penetration into unknown countries that makes for force and opposition, but rather the motive for the penetration.

Trade was beneficial to the Emir of Kano, and nothing, in his view, was going to be taken from him. A system of barter was to be inaugurated—the fact that both sides were satisfied when a few Birmingham beads were exchanged for much

ivory and ostrich feathers and skins does not mitigate the case—and Dr. Miller, of the Church Missionary Society, had medical knowledge and aid at his command to benefit the people whose guest he was. All was going well until the solid British square arrived, with infantry on the flanks and artillery inside. The tune was changed. Here were men come to “attack.”

Of such, in the main, is the history of the growth of the British Empire composed. There is no doubt that in many cases the soldiers “made” the inhabitants fight in order to get “a show” and acquire promotion and decorations.

I mention these facts because they were intimately related to what went on in France and Flanders, and in other parts of the world, less than twenty years ago, and from the effects of which we have not yet recovered. British subjects were led to do the most appalling things in various parts of the world, things they would never have dreamed of doing if they had not, as British subjects, become enmeshed in the system which was responsible for murder being committed by me on the Strazeel Road.

All the talk in the world about peace will be of no avail unless, and until, the disagreeable problem arising from the fact that we possess a British Empire is taken into consideration in regard to other peoples and their wants.

They say that it is easier to get the best out of

a man by treating him fairly. Well, while we are on the subject of empires and possessions, have we treated the Germans fairly?

What gave rise to the advent of Herr Hitler?

If the English and French had listened to Herr Stresemann so closely as they have been compelled to listen to Herr Hitler, there would not to-day be this hideous armaments race throughout Europe.

Is that the best way to behave? It is at least the way in which successive French and English Governments have behaved ever since 1919.

I know that people will say: O, he wants to "give" the ex-German colonies back to Germany. I want to do nothing of the kind. I neither believe in bartering human beings (whether they be "natives" of backward countries, unemployed from the distressed areas, or underpaid workmen, it does not matter), nor exploiting them for gain. We have done a considerable amount of the latter in our time, within the British Empire, and a certain amount of the former, too. I am not aware whether we asked any of the "natives" of the German colonies whether they objected to being taken over by the victorious countries, in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles. True, we placed these colonies under mandate, but there is no reason why our own colonies, and the colonies of the victorious, should not also be placed under

mandate—if we are honest. In point of fact, we used the mandate when we wanted to ; and when any mandate became a nuisance or was too expensive for us to administer (in other words, if we did not get enough out of the arrangement !), we turned it down and said that the country concerned was strong enough to stand on its own legs.

Those who strive for peace, and in their heart of hearts desire it, will seriously have to consider what is to be done about the British Empire before they can achieve their object of obtaining a strong Empire free from fear and interruption. We need not inquire very closely as to how we got the Empire ; it is enough to say that, in accordance with our custom, we have never yet fought a war save in “ defence ” . . . yet, the British Empire has grown to such a size that it has become the envy of the world and the prey of the avaricious. Seemingly “ defence ” pays splendid dividends.

Unfortunately, concurrent with the imperial development, weapons of destruction have improved to such an extent, mainly in the air, as to make it impossible now to hold the Empire by force—that is to say, by ships and bayonets.

The Empire can still be of use to the world, but only if it is arranged along the lines laid down by men like Mr. George Lansbury, Canon Sheppard, and Lord Ponsonby. The moment England lifts a finger to defend herself by force



her day is done. The bomber, as Mr. Baldwin emphasized, always gets through. . . .

All the rearmament going on at the moment is mostly due to fear on the part of those who possess, fear that what they possess will be taken away from them. This international possessiveness and acquisitiveness must be ended if we are to be saved. An understanding must be arrived at among the various nations, and the world's resources pooled for the benefit of the whole world. When that is achieved the need for defence will have ended, save in the form of a police force. Only, we must not put the cart before the horse ; for the police came *after* the establishment of law and order ; not before it.

It is not the duty of a soldier to recommend ways and means of world administration by statesmen ; but it is the duty of a soldier to tell, or warn, the statesmen when the game of soldiering is up. And this I do now.

I know that it is fashionable for people to say that the South African War was the last of the "gentlemen's wars," and that the Great War and all others that may come after it are in a different category altogether.

I dispute this. The South African War was no more a gentleman's war than was the Great War. Each side accused the other—often quite wrongly—of the most appalling atrocities. And each side had to do very cruel things to the other—because war is war.

The only thing that alters the quality of war is the progressive modernization of weapons used in warfare. Had the Boer War been fought ten years later, or had Bleriot flown the Channel ten years earlier, the South African War would not have been a so-called gentleman's war. It would have been an aerial picnic, with bombs in the picnic basket ; for it may be safely assumed that the Boers, owing to their traditional backwardness, would not have possessed aircraft. Instead, the Boers fought us to a finish, because for a hundred years they had been accustomed to defending themselves with small-arm weapons against man and beast ; they were therefore much better at the game than we were, we who never seem to profit from our past mistakes.

We were beaten by the Boers in 1881, and roughly handled in 1899, having learned nothing from our adversaries in the interim. In 1914 we managed to prevent the victory which the Germans intended to inflict upon the French within forty days, and by the end of the war we had learned a great deal about new weapons. We knew their devastating power, and had the war lasted until 1919, no doubt we would have laid a certain number of German industrial towns in ruins. We know what that damage would have amounted to, and we know to-day the deadly effectiveness of modern munitions, and the horrors that can be perpetrated in the twinkling of an eye by aeroplanes flying at a

greater speed and unloosening bigger loads than were ever dreamed about in 1918 ; but we will persist in making mistakes similar to the ones we made during the first South African War, and in the Crimean War forty-five years earlier. We have learnt little and unlearned nothing. We plan with optimism our scheme of " Defence " at a colossal sum, with the blessing of the State Church—and hope for the best.

The Christian churches should be able to tell us to-day, after the lessons centuries of history have taught us, just why we are in the jamb we are, because the means employed determine the ends achieved. Alas, the churches cannot do that, for the means that they have employed in the past, and are still employing, are opposed to the teachings of Christ and have in themselves determined in great measure the terrible conditions of unrest in the world to-day, so pregnant with disaster for to-morrow.

Were it not for this humbug, for this hypocrisy of military religion, the British Government at the Disarmament Conference would have fallen in with the suggestions of the other nations and agreed to the total abolition of aerial bombardment. We objected to giving up a " cheap " method of maintaining " law and order " on the North-West Frontier of India by means of bombing. Following our noble example, the French demanded to be allowed to keep their bombers in Northern Africa for a similar purpose. But whereas bombers on the North-

West Frontier of India are a long way from the capitals of Europe, the bombers of Northern Africa are on the very doorstep of the frightened Continent, and could be used over Europe within an hour or two of necessity demanding their use. . . . Thus did a great chance to achieve some measure of security for the masses of people come to nothing. A million hopes died that day ; millions of lives will be forfeited for that day.

If the Christian churches, led by the Established Church of England, had thrown their fetters aside and protested at Geneva until aerial bombing of back areas was adjudged unthinkable and impossible among Christian people, they would have sprung up in strength and glory, supported by the ordinary people to the glory of God and the comfort of mankind.

But, no ! The Disarmament Conference broke down. The politicians and their military advisers murdered pacifism and closed every avenue to that ideal. I wonder, how many times have we crucified Christ ?

We can expect little from the Church, when men like the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London say that Christians may kill and that Abyssinia should have "cured" all pacifists.

The lesson of the Abyssinian campaign is that while to be inadequately armed is a great danger, to remain unarmed deprives the invader, or the defender, of the obvious excuse for violence as

was seen in the case of Wallace at Kano, Miller at Gerko, Dickinson and Abadie at Zaria, and the French in the Ruhr shortly after the Great War.

It may be that one day a great and real revival of religion in this country will be witnessed, that revival so heartily desired by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Only, he will not be in it, for before that auspicious day dawns military religion will have to be abolished, and all the attendant cant and humbug with it. It may be that such a revival will be due to the magnificent lead of people like Canon Sheppard, Dr. Soper, Dr. Grey, Dr. Maude Royden, and Miss Ruth Fry, to mention only a few of the stalwarts who have seen the truth.

A recall to religion, a recall to Christ ! That will come when we realize the true Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. The Church, allied to the State and the Army, can never achieve that, for the false pride of patriotism and the humility of Christianity can never be reconciled.

“ This religion of blood and race is the deadly enemy of Christ and His Church,” said the Rev. James Burns, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of England, in his recent address to the General Assembly. He declared that the Church of Christ is to-day confronted with the gravest menace that it has known since the days of Constantine, and with realism in his utterance, he added : “ *If the Church is to recover its power, it must*

*show to the world by some great heroic act that it possesses the mind of Christ and is prepared to follow His call to the uttermost."*

For lack of that heroism the nations move towards the brink of the abyss, to the dismal beat of the drums of military religion.

## *Chapter II*

### THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

FOR centuries the aristocracy and the gentry of this country have sent their sons into the Services and the Church, and there has grown up a strong Triple Alliance of the Army, the Navy, and the Church, strengthened by Service influences exercised on behalf of Service families, and by the patronage of those same families with church livings at their disposal.

The Alliance worked fairly well in the days when weapons of war were not so deadly or so fiendish, when the killing of fighting-men was mostly done in a "gentlemanly manner," and when non-combatants—women and children and non-fighters—were immune from harm.

To-day, things are vastly different. There is no immunity for the most helpless and the most innocent. The aeroplane has transformed all that ; and the women and the children and the maimed, sitting by their firesides, praying in their churches, hiding in their cellars, running with panic in the open fields, are the victims of the diabolical invention and perversion of their fellow-men in times of "just" wars.

Of course, all wars are "just" ! It is easy for

religious hypocrisy and governmental propaganda to justify anything and everything. We surely have lived long enough to realize that. Our bishops talk of a "just" war—as if there ever had been one—and of the "sword of righteousness and justice." Why are they not honest enough to talk of the "bomb of injustice?" If they did, it would be impossible for them to acquiesce in warfare of any "moral" brand. In shackling themselves to the Articles of Religion, do they not realize this day that if "It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the magistrate, to wear weapons and serve in the wars," even that man-made sop to the Christian conscience can never make it lawful to massacre women and children who do not wear weapons, to shoot them down, bomb them, gas them and burn them from the heavens above, whence came God's manna to His people.

The Triple Alliance cannot stand the strain of another ally in the shape of the Royal Air Force. It becomes a quadruple alliance which must burn and murder to justify its very existence, even in the name of "defence." The target of the airman is not now the machines of his enemy, but the towns and cities of his enemy's country and the women and children who never, by the greatest stretch of imagination or propaganda, can be called "foes."

How can honest men escape that truth? More and more people are coming to realize it, and for that very reason the authorities are greatly



troubled, for they see in the not distant future the possibility of a tremendous split in the Established Church, a split that will rank men against each other on the opposing sides of God and the State. What a Church member may conscientiously do, and what the Crown may conscientiously command that same man to do, are antithetical demands on that man's conscience and liberty of thought that must inevitably lead to a conflict of loyalties and a disruption that can never be healed by mere compromise.

During the last Assembly of the Church of England a well-known layman rose up and said that although he had lost his son in the last war, and although he would have been prepared to grant him complete liberty of conscience to become a Conscientious Objector in 1916, he was glad now that his son had joined the army and had been killed instead of going to gaol as a war-resister.

I can appreciate that father's feelings ; but it alarms me, because the man who uttered those words is no fool. He was ready to grant liberty of conscience to his son on Christian grounds, but what about his own conscience based also, it is to be presumed, on Christian principles ? If for one he was prepared to grant absolution from killing, and if for another (himself) he admitted the rightness of killing, how comes it that he could house two consciences in the one mind and still justify himself in the eyes of God ? On the one hand he was a Christian—on the other he was

an Established Churchman ! It seems to me to be all wrong. Does it not strike you that way ?

When I had to execute a comrade for desertion I granted him facilities for getting drunk just before the execution in the hope that the doomed man would be saved a fearful night. When I wrote of this act of mine, I was assailed by Brass Hats, bishops, and even lawyers. Said the bishops : " He was about to face His Maker ; he should have been given all the time there was to make his peace with God." Said the Brass Hats : " An appalling piece of indiscipline, quite unworthy of the British uniform." But why the culprit had to make his peace with God when the only trouble he had at that time was with the Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies in France, I do not know. And why it should be disgraceful to go out of my way to try to make the last eight hours of an unhappy man's life less miserable, I fail to understand. It was done in secret : no moral code was transgressed—not even the military code which exists to punish individuals as a lesson to others.

Of all the responsibilities we had on our shoulders, I believe that one of the worst was that which made it necessary, and legal, to kill young men unaccustomed to the strain of war and unable to stand up to it. So long as the bishops support warfare, they must be prepared to bear the responsibility of the deaths of those misguided youths by the rifles of their comrades or the revolvers of their officers.

There is nothing I dislike more than to have to criticize men of intellect and professional attainment like the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, because I realize my own limitations and know that while they occupy the pinnacles where brains are required, I am necessarily relegated to the basement. But—even in the basement I am not blind ; the things I see on the horizon-line loom out so clearly that one would have to be exceedingly short-sighted to miss them.

As I have already said—the Archbishop of Canterbury defends war in the name of “defence.” The Archbishop of York says that Christians may in certain circumstances kill their fellows. I ask, make war against whom—and kill whom? The enemy, or the enemy’s wives, and mothers and children? One’s own people, legally or illegally, in order to make others face up to the enemy? Whether it be defence or attack—that is war, and war means killing, and killing can never be anything else than killing, no matter with what fine names you invest it or with what usurped authority you glorify it.

So the Church is for war. Just as, over a hundred years ago, it was for slavery. Then, some of the most devout Christians maintained that slavery was not only justifiable, but an economic necessity in the scheme of things. They pointed to cheap labour and production in America . . . until public opinion, not the Church, mark you, was so inflamed that the way was at last made to abolish slavery in principle. To-day,

of course, the Church, having been swayed by the more Christian desires of the masses, is opposed to slavery. Is not that sufficient to shake one's faith in a religious institution that serves first the State and then God?

We wait again for a lead from the Church in regard to war. But as things are to-day, and as men now speak, we will wait in vain until the people exercise their liberty of conscience and compel the Church, for its own safety, to act in the proper way, in the true Christian way. Perhaps a hundred years from now the Church will be opposed to war—but think of all that will have happened in the interval, all the killing and dying and suffering and crucifying.

The Church is opposed to child labour and sweated labour, and slavery. It is opposed to malicious propaganda, murder, robbery, starvation, intemperance, prostitution. Now all these things are vices of war. If the Church leaders studied them they would realize that war is made up of all these things. Yet, we have the astonishing spectacle of the Christian Church denouncing the evil parts in the name of God, and upholding the evil whole in the name of the State.

Is it not true that the Chief Officers of the Church cannot inquire into the evil alliance to which they belong and retain their offices at the same time? Is it beyond the Archbishop of Canterbury's capacity to inquire into the "defence" of the country in order that he may

see how far Christianity may travel along the road of war? Can he not examine motive and aggression and learn what ordinary people like myself have learned—that motive (a cause of war) and aggression (the result) are either quite different or quite the same according to propaganda and the corrupt inspiration behind it? The war of 1914-18 was countenanced by the Archbishop of Canterbury of that time, and the motive was said to be German avarice and aggression. But we know to-day that there was much more to it than that. Surely the Archbishop knows! If so, what steps has he taken to have the guilt clause removed from the Treaty of Versailles by general consent? Does not the Archbishop realize what led Herr Hitler to repudiate that clause and many other iniquitous clauses of the Treaty? Surely even the Archbishop knows that it was the blundering of Sir John Simon at Geneva that caused Herr Hitler to renounce the League of Nations, to rearm, and to reoccupy the Rhineland. And what did the Established Church, over which the Primate rules, ever do to make England and France honour their obligations under the Versailles Treaty once Germany was disarmed? That Treaty was conceived in blood and signed in blood—the blood of millions of innocent men and women: and as a document of peace it is valueless.

The Church had its great opportunity. What has it done with it?

The Archbishop does not love the Russian Revival. But does he know why the Russian Revolution took place during the Great War, and why the Russian Church, which claimed to be Christian, was wiped off the face of the earth? It was because the Orthodox Church of Russia—the Established Church of Russia, if you like—played a part similar to that being played by the Established Church of England to-day! Only, there is this difference: the Russians, being five hundred years behind the times, had some excuse for doing what they did. The English Church has none.

I make no claim to be a prophet in my own land. But this I do know—if the Churches ever again permit another war they will surely be wiped off the face of the earth by the people they will have betrayed for the last time, and among the first to do the cleansing will be the ex-Servicemen of 1914-18 who marched off to battle, consecrated by their Church, to the martial strains of "Onward Christian Soldiers."

I saw one hundred priests executed in the Baltic by Russian ex-Service men, because they had let their country down! Ecclesiastics may well reflect on this.

This is why I link up so intimately the Coronation Service, the Consecration of Colours, and all the other ju-jaws which so many clergymen appear to like, and which they perform with such punctilious irreverence—for to be a humbug in these matters is to be irreverent.

The recall to religion, staged by the Archbishop on the one hand—and the dreadful hush-hush policy of the Church in war and about war, on the other, do not go well together. I am not sure in my own mind in which quarter the recall to real religion is most needed ; but an examination of the utterances in the last Church Assembly inclines me to the belief that it is for the clergy themselves that the recall is so urgently necessary. In that case, the Archbishop of Canterbury has an even more difficult job before him. When I was an active soldier I always found it easier to discipline and train my own Brigade than criticize the deficiencies of other brigades around me, and more worth while. But, of course, in those days none of us had any doubt as to where we stood !

During my service in the Army I have been greatly troubled by the conduct of senior officers suffering from a vague sort of religion. I remember a colonel who used to lecture his erring subalterns after he had told them off, in the orderly room, by making them go to his quarters and there listen to him reciting extracts from the Bible in their disfavour. It so happened that while at school I used often to carry off the Divinity prize—probably because I liked the subject as it came easily to me, forming in my mind a sort of history, and probably because of the added incentive that Divinity prizemen, together with the choir, were given a holiday to go with the cricket eleven to Charterhouse to

watch the cricket, and to Marlborough with the XV, in order to watch the football.

Well, I knew my Bible and the lessons it contained. And one day, when I was a senior subaltern, I was held responsible for the activities of the other subalterns in the billiards-room after a hectic guest night. For this I stood in front of the colonel, in the quietude of his den, and was compelled to listen to the twentieth chapter of Deuteronomy, from verse eighteen onwards. This includes the passage :

“ This our son is stubborn and rebellious ; he will not obey our voice ; he is a glutton and a drunkard.” Having said this, the Colonel paused, looked through me with his eyes soaked in pity. Then he flashed his indignation and his moustache bristled.

“ I do not know what to do with you,” he said, grinding his teeth. “ You are incorrigible ; you should be shot ! What do you think about it ? ”

“ ‘ And all the men of this city shall stone him with stones, that he may die,’ ” I replied, continuing the quotation which I knew by heart.

The Colonel looked at me with amazement.

“ Where the devil did you learn that ? ” he demanded.

“ At school, sir,” I replied.

“ Gracious me ! ” he exclaimed. “ You should be a chaplain. You would do much better there than as a combatant. That is—if you know any more ! ”



He then proceeded to test me. So astonished was he at my Biblical knowledge that he instructed me to draw up a list of Biblical injunctions concerning *esprit de corps* and *morale* for the men, during winter training in barracks; he also informed the senior chaplain of the forces that he had a badly behaved youngster who he thought should be attached to the chaplain's department! "The trouble is," he added, "he is not ordained. Could this be arranged?"

Needless to say, the transfer was neither suitable nor approved by the chaplain and myself. But the incident does show the curious ideas regarding religion which used to prevail in the Army in those days and which, for all I know, prevail there to-day.

There is another side to the picture. During the war an excited adjutant came rushing into the commanding officer's billet, in France, prior to a grand attack, and when asked by his colonel what the matter was, the youngster explained that the chaplain was preaching sedition in the market-square to the troops.

"What's he saying?" the colonel asked. And the adjutant revealed that the chaplain had told the men that war was contrary to the teachings of Christ.

"Of course it is," replied the colonel. "What fool ever said it was not! But what the devil has that got to do with us?"

Now how does that tally with the utterances

of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York? Who is right—priest or soldier?

Much of the reasoning of parsons seems to be derived from the saying: “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

When discussing this very point with an incumbent whom I know well I found him to be entirely of the opinion that this saying simplifies his duty towards God and man tremendously. He apparently believes, as a follower of Archbishop Temple, that it is on this that the Archbishop bases his conduct and justifies his public utterances. The point seems to be whether we are to take for granted that everything Cæsar says and does is not only true, but good and reasonable. I am afraid, however, having personally peeped behind the curtain, that I am too well acquainted with the routine of all governments to believe that few things that Cæsar says, through the mouths of his paid officials, are entirely for the good of man or the benefit of the State. Rather, I am of the opinion that at all times and in all things, before the wants of Cæsar are fulfilled, the questions are asked: “Is it opportune? Is it expedient? Will it make difficulties? Is it in accordance with precedent? Is it dignified?” I am referring more particularly now to state government conditioned by limited monarchy and state church. Being independent of decorative institutions and the fetish of precedent and the hypocrisy of keeping up appearances, dictators

do not stop to question or confuse themselves with ethical arguments ; they thus have a better chance of doing extraordinarily badly or extraordinarily well whatever they set their minds to, according to the mood of the moment.

I told my vicar friend of the shooting of young Crockett in France. After I had explained the case to him, he said : “ Undoubtedly this comes under the heading of ‘ render unto Cæsar.’ It was the law of the land.”

How easy it seems to be to satisfy one’s conscience.

I pointed out to him that surely it was possible for the law of the land to run contrary to the law of God. But he would not have that. His chief reason for not admitting the conflict was that it would be “ quite impossible to carry on in such circumstances—if we admitted that the acts of Cæsar had to be conditioned by conforming to the Divine ruling.”

I, for one, cannot accept this view. I know only too well from my own experience that some of the acts of government are so bad that they have to be hushed up, for the primary reason that an ever-patient democracy would never be able to accept them as good and reasonable.

There is more in this official allegiance to both God and Cæsar than meets the eye, and the point might be laboured for a long time, but one curious feature is that in all the swearing and administration of oaths to God, which are part and parcel of the strengthening of the hand of

Cæsar, it is apparent that even Cæsar at times, when it suits him, admits his inferiority to the Almighty. And yet Cæsar uses the oath to God in order that men can be made to fight Cæsar's wars which God is opposed to. When Cæsar Number One goes to war against Cæsar Number Two in another country, both Cæsars claim that God is on their respective sides. *Both* Cæsars cannot be right—but both Cæsars can be *wrong*. Yes, terribly wrong !

I know it is often said—and often have I heard it myself—that “good” can come out of war, and that some good has come out of all wars. This is a dangerous point of view. Profiteers may find good in war when their money-hoards mount up quickly at the expense of their fellows ; and military officers may earn speedy promotion and high honours, and politicians may be given chances of office and fame which would not in the ordinary, peaceful, course of events come their way. These are the only “good” things that can come out of war. In the past, when weapons were primitive, when fighting-men waged war only with fighting-men, and when life was not so congested, a measure of liberty was secured by war. But to-day, with all history behind us, we must ask ourselves the question : “Could the same amount of good, or more good, have been acquired by any other means than war ?” By this test it will be found, and fairly found, that the war-way of settling disputes does not settle anything ; rather it unsettles, and leaves more

to be cleared up when "peace" is signed than was ever in existence when war was declared.

A young friend of mine at a debate was asked that question about good coming out of war. He answered that, in regard to the Great War, if we looked at the map of Europe we would see that vast territories, such as Poland, and smaller countries adjacent to Germany, had re-established their independence, or changed hands, as a result of the Great War.

To my mind that is a short-sighted answer to a short-sighted policy. In that very exchange of war, fragments of a patched peace, are all the elements of fresh strife and turmoil. Much of the other territories taken from the Central Powers yesterday are the germinating beds of the wars to-morrow. The seeds have been well planted. Time, and the heat of nationalistic passions, will one day produce the evil fruit. The independence of the new and smaller states dotted over Europe is by no means as good for democracy as we make out, what with a multiplicity of frontiers and tariffs and the aggravation of brand new national patriotisms.

What good came out of the last South African War, which lasted for two and a half years? True, after thousands of lives were sacrificed and a great amount of misery suffered, the two white races—the Boers and the English—became friendly, save in the back bush. At least, they are friendly on the surface, and the arrangement works. But was it necessary to fight things out to

a grim finish in order to acquire the state of peace and prosperity existing in South Africa to-day? The Boer War of 1881, and the constant friction and fighting between the Dutch and the English for almost a hundred years before that, laid those seeds of hate and suspicion which led eventually to the Jameson Raid and the South African War of 1899-1902.

Look at Canada and the United States of America! There, the scramble for natural wealth, for mapped possessions, was very much like the race of avarice in South Africa. Only, the American neighbours were wise enough to realize the unending folly of making war because of commercial desires. They agreed to exist as neighbours, on peaceful terms, and to-day there is neither enmity nor a fortified frontier between those two great nations.

To-day there is not room for both God and Cæsar in a world run by profit-making commerce for profit-making commerce. The unseen power behind the Triple Alliance of Church, the Army and the Navy is that very brand of commercialism disguised in the form of State. There is the real Cæsar to whom the just rendering is due; after Cæsar comes God. Oh, I know there are many who will turn on me for so speaking. But how is it possible to ignore the truth? The idea that everything Cæsar says must be right, and everything that Cæsar demands must be good, is strange. But that is the very breath of Imperialism—despite all that is said on behalf of the

British Empire. Whatever is rendered to Cæsar as his due should surely also merit the approval of the Almighty.

I recall here another debate where it was mentioned that through combat Ireland had got a great deal of her independence which she would not otherwise have gained. It was also stated at that time that I should know this better than most people because my resignation from the command of the Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary had done more for the independence of Southern Ireland than many other things. This is not the place, nor am I the proper person, to argue that point, but I may be permitted, with all humility, to say this : I resigned because the combat was being carried out on foul lines, by selected and foul men, for a grossly foul purpose, based on the most Satanic of all rules, that "the end justifies the means." God knows the devilry that that particular philosophy has inspired. Just the other day the peaceful citizens of Guernica were massacred, and that corrupt rule of human conduct was put forward as the excuse of the callous murderers acting in the name of a Little Cæsar of bleeding Spain.

The foul practices go on—as they went on under my very eyes in troubled Ireland. England has nothing to be proud of in the Irish Treaty. Nothing ! The story of Ireland, written by force ever since the days of Strongbow, is a perfect illustration of the truth that no good can come out

of war. Do not forget that the Irish War has lasted for five hundred years and is still going on under the surface.

Materialism plays its sinister part, and plays it well, but not for any good. How much better it would have been for the safety of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and for the prosperity of both, if fifty years ago the advice of Gladstone had been heeded. In 1885 Gladstone was refused permission to grant Ireland a milk-and-water measure of home rule which would then have been acceptable. He was refused because the vested interests of English and Irish people queered the political pitch. And so decency was made to blush, and forbearance was forgotten—and in the years to come more and more men were killed, and I was asked to kill more, so that Cæsar might be served, under an oath sworn to God. Oh, the shocking travesty of it all.

See how the evil machinery works : financially minded and Radical Republican, Joe Chamberlain, was turned into an ardent Imperialist ; he proceeded to strengthen the Tory Party by drafting in wobbly Radicals, who called themselves “ Liberal Unionists.” Thus was laid the foundations of the 1916 Irish Rebellion, the Irish Insurrection of 1920–21, and the Irish Civil War of a later date. This same piece of political engineering had much to do with the fermentation of strife in South Africa, for which Joe Chamberlain was the imperial custodian in the



years immediately preceding, and during, the South African War.

We ought to have learned our lesson in that defeat suffered by us in that particular Imperialistic adventure which ended with the American War of Independence. That should have corrected our Imperial ideas. But—no ! Thanks to Kipling and other fire-eaters, who kept away from the flames themselves, fresh fires were fanned to fury.

I took part in the Ulster gun-running and arming and drilling—with a threat of rebellion—in 1913-14, which was a direct outcome of the rendering to Cæsar, in Ireland, in 1885. The present rearmament programme of England, under the guise of Defence, so that we may be in a position to threaten reprisal if an enemy attacks, savours strongly of that bluff in Ulster in 1914, when the guns were run into Larne under the nose of the British Fleet, while the admirals put their telescopes to their temporarily, and politically, blinded eyes. I do not in the least blame the Ulstermen for arming. They were given a very raw deal, and I can appreciate their feelings. But I am quite confident that the Ulster Volunteers would never have been used by Sir Edward (afterwards Lord) Carson against the British Army. (They would have been of little use, anyhow, in such an emergency.) The British Government, however—and this is now history—were terrified out of their wits by the Ulstermen and even went so far as to move,

wisely, a whole British battalion away from the city of Belfast where they were surrounded by an armed mob. The whole shameful story, from 1885 onwards, reeks of perfidy ; it is a lesson that war, either international or civil, is a foolish way of trying to settle disputes. The various Irish wars that have raged through the centuries have neither settled anything nor seem likely ever to settle anything.

I sympathize with my young friend, a Radical reformer, when he asserts that some good came out of Ireland for Ireland as a result of her stubborn revolt in 1920-21. That it never need have been is entirely another matter, but how much better would the Fair Green Isle have been for all concerned if the brigands had originally kept out. For three centuries and more of warfare in Ireland the rule of the gangster has obtained. Hired mercenaries and assassins fought assassins and hired mercenaries to the cheers of the absent landlords—like the absent landlords of Spain to-day—and successive grasping governments at Westminster. But how many people realize that the British Army—the *raison d'être* of whose existence is its constant preparedness for warfare—left the shores of Ireland in 1922 respected by the Irish people because it declined to fight in the dirty, underhand way in which the British Government wished it to fight ? The dirty work was left to the Royal Irish Constabulary, reinforced by Englishmen, who acted as assassins and *agents provocateurs*. Some of the

killers and paid inciters in civilian clothes were seconded from the British War Office to out-do that king of gangsters, Al Capone.

There is the truth. And there is the hand of Cæsar again—a dirty and illegal hand. Englishmen may be astounded to know that such things ever went on within a few miles of London without their knowledge. Cæsar may keep it dark from the citizens of England, but he can hardly expect to keep it dark from God and the oppressed.

Men may ask: If such things can be done within a few miles of London at the behest of the British Government and in the name of the King-Emperor, what else goes on—and has gone on—in the distant places of Cæsar's wide Empire?

Fortunately there is a happier answer to that. The average Englishman, as an individual, is a decent fellow and fairly well-behaved. His personal ideals are loftier than his Government's. The remote regions of the Empire have been run on cleaner lines by those Englishmen who have been able to act as individuals and not entirely as the hirelings of a state machine invented for and run by invested interests. Mr. Baldwin has himself admitted—ought I to say, confessed?—that it is a pity that public men in power sometimes have to do things officially which they would shrink from doing as private persons! There you have that fatal conflict between God and Cæsar, that very conflict of

two opposing powers or loyalties that leads eventually, relentlessly, to war—collective, national, international, or personal.

The other reason why the fighting, at least, has been on a more decent level (if fighting to kill can ever be so described) in the remoter parts of the Empire, is because the "natives" have in the past been less well-equipped, both mentally and physically, than the English invaders, so that the same clash of man and metal was not necessary to achieve the subjection by force. But in Ireland the story was different, for the Irish people were as well-advanced as the invaders who desired to own their island but adopted the wrong tactics from the very outset. That desire to "own" was the only point of conflict in Ireland. Think of it, Cæsar desired, and Christians killed Christians for centuries—and still there is no peace.

How futile it is for the Archbishop of Canterbury to expect a real religious revival—a real recall to Christianity, that is—when the Church and its temporal allies have their foremost loyalty in Cæsar and not in Christ, as history past and present proves so conclusively.

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope seem to be agreed—at least so one concludes from their respective utterances—that Communism is a form of life which should be opposed to the utmost by all decent Christians, because a Communistic regime envisages a drastic reformation of religious institutions, particularly

those which the Archbishop and the Pope represent. But they have both missed the point, for it was necessary for the Russian revolutionaries to wipe out the Russian Orthodox Church because that institution, as an ally and dependent of the Russian Crown, was a hindrance to progress and a perpetual menace to peace. Anybody who has ever been in Russia knows that. Yet what is not understood is that it is possible to have a Communistic state which ignores the Church altogether while leaving it to its own business—provided, of course, that the Church is wise enough to see that its strength lies in its minding its own business.

Mussolini has managed to come to terms with the Pope in regard to Fascism, in its very home, and there is no reason why the Pope should not also come to terms with a form of Communism in Ireland, provided the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland confines itself to its own business, which is the teachings of Christ and the spiritual welfare of the people.

During a recent visit to Ireland, after many years' absence, I was struck by the fact that the lesson contained in the story of Ireland during the past five hundred years is applicable to world conditions to-day. In conversation with senior officers of the new Irish Free State Army I frequently heard the opinion expressed that the next clash in Ireland will be to decide the issue between Fascism and Communism. It must be remembered, however, that each country

breeds its own particular brand of Fascism or Communism, and that the frills of both differ so greatly throughout the whole world that often they are mistaken for other things and called by other names. We so readily forget that a Communistic existence was prevalent in the world in the early ages, and it was only with the advent of that form of living in which the factor of "personal possession" dominated—and still dominates—that warfare with all its endless evils and its inevitable Fascism gripped the civilized world.

The Russian revolt towards Communism, away from a corrupt form of government and a state churchianity, is merely an endeavour to return to a way of life which Christ would have probably approved, had it come in His time and without force. But Cæsar would not have approved. And he did not approve—and force was used because the end justified the means. Deprive Communism of force—that is, fighting—and there remains a perfect way of life.

The only way to acquire peace in the world is to face up to the facts and learn our lesson from the history written in the blood of men and women who have fought in vain under the Triple Alliance founded on false gospels. The clash between Fascism and Communism will surely come unless we are prepared to see how, by honest behaviour, both forces can be reconciled in a warless world.

That is the only hope of the survival of the

British Commonwealth of Nations, which I have helped in some small way to build up, and which my ancestors helped always to sustain.

Are the Christian Churches powerless to avert catastrophe, powerless to lead?

Not if they are really Christian Churches, for the way has been clear for two thousand years.

## *Chapter 12*

### DEFENCE : THE LAST WAR AND THE NEXT

THE honest person who wishes to avoid war is bound to come up against the vexed problem of "defence." And inevitably he will be asked : "What will you do if England is invaded ?" It is a ten-to-one chance that he will emerge from his ethical dilemma to reply : "I will defend England to the last—with my life if necessary."

The technique of "defence," like the technique of most other things has necessarily undergone great changes during the last twenty years or more. In an evolving world few things remain static, and defence is not one of them. We are fond of the word "defence" in our modern system of living. We talk of the "defence of the £," "the defence of the franc," "the defence of the markets," "the defence of trade," "the defence of the standard of living," "the defence of liberty," "the defence of democracy," and so on and on. Our whole mode of living, so far departed from Christian ideals, is one of aggression and defence, of a constant warring of forces against forces and a perpetual dispeace of the world, the state and the individual. Defence is the mainstay in a universe dedicated to war,



whether it be military, commercial or social. "Defence" is the despairing cry of the doomed.

We talk of the defence of democracy—until the first shot is fired. Then it is realized, too late, that democracy cannot be defended, for the very force necessary for its defence is the same force that destroys it. The Great War was a war in defence of democracy—so they said!—but it left us controlled and dominated all the world over by dictators. Even in our own country dictatorship came, in the cunning form of the post-war Coalition Government, when the liberty of Ireland, the liberty of India, and in a minor degree the liberty of our own country, were menaced by a "respectable" Fascist rule. It must always be so after modern war. Why is that glaring truth so foolishly ignored?

In the past the defence of land has centred round frontiers, on the sea, and at strategic points on the coastal lines. But the aeroplane has changed all that. All over the world the hitherto impregnable frontiers can now be trespassed with impunity by way of the air. And England is open to invasion whenever zero-hour falls and the aerial invaders begin their devilish work. All the old ideas of defence are finished with for ever.

During the 1881 Boer War the town of Potchefstroom was defended by my father's regiment for a time, but eventually, owing to lack of food and information, the colonel surrendered to Cronje, the Boer commander, whom

we defeated nineteen years later at Paardeburg, during the second Boer War. In 1899 and 1900 the Boers besieged Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking ; these places were successfully defended, relief arriving in time to prevent starvation. But during the Great War Kut was besieged by the Turks, in Mesopotamia, and although food was dropped from aeroplanes into the beleaguered town, the technique of modern warfare had so changed that it was impossible for the garrison to hold out, and they were compelled to surrender.

At about the same time there was going on around the coast of England, underneath the water, a veritable siege, which nearly starved this country into surrender. The emergency was met, and England saved by the skin of her teeth, only by the enlightenment of the officers of the Royal Navy, who successfully combated the submarine menace by counter-action. The uninitiated may say that if this was done in regard to hostile submarines, it could surely be done against the attack of hostile aircraft when they invade England and drop destruction on its towns and cities by fire, gas, and high-explosive. It will be found, however, on examination, that the answer is not the same. There is no counter measure that can be taken from the land to repulse the air menace. During the Great War enemy submarines could be located, hemmed in, and destroyed, owing to the technical nature of attack and the limitations of the activities of

hostile submarines in narrow seas. But the air is free and boundless. Circumstances have altered completely ; and the technique of defence is now totally different.

So far as England is concerned the new technique of defence is to avoid combat at all costs ; it will be of no avail to levy equal destruction on the invader of this country. That will only hasten the end of democracy—never defend it. The firing of the first shot must at all costs be avoided. This can be done only in peace-time, by pressing on honestly, unremittingly, to a solution of those problems which lead to the causes of war and invasion. The real defence is not to fight ; it is for England, as the greatest nation in the world, to set the lead, to examine those causes and eliminate them. That is what now constitutes the defence of England in the new technique.

It is idle for statesmen to turn to the soldier and say : “ This conclusion of yours is no solution, because it is not the soldier’s duty to solve the economic and trade problems.” But it *is* the soldier’s duty to state the limitations of military defence, and it is only when the limitations of military defence are realized and acted upon—by their total rejection as cogs in the wheel of defence—that statesmen will be persuaded to begin solving the problem from their end. In other words, we have to learn that the new technique of defence does not include war-waging, just as the scientists and doctors have

learned that the defence of the human body is best secured by the avoidance, or elimination, of those disease problems which, if allowed to gain hold, set up a physical war with fatal results.

The character of defence in all walks of life has changed with the times. The science of war, with its multiplying ramifications, cannot be excepted from the universal trend of events. A hundred years ago the methods of fire-fighting were primitive, and a new technique of defence has been evolved which is more concerned with the elimination of the cause than the defence against the effect.

The trouble with the military people is that they are moved by a false sentiment surrounding the infallibility, the permanency, of their professions on land, sea, and in the air. They are not as a rule greatly exercised over the causes of their being required to exist at all ; and it is impossible for them, owing to their necessarily limited outlook, to realize that the sands have run out and that the things they could do prior to 1914 in the name of defence can no longer be done by them. They attach to their own technique of destruction the latest scientific discoveries and inventions of horror, and claim to be ready to defend us against the same instruments of war and frightfulness.

How utterly false. How terribly blind. What is required in the world to-day is a scheme of defence by construction, not by destruction.

The only way that can be achieved is for the ordinary people to take the defence out of the hands of the professional militarists and to associate themselves with a universal plan of peace construction by the elimination of such causes of international strife as trade barriers, restricted natural wealth, exchange, manipulation, profiteering, and colonial claims.

Few soldiers can be expected to understand these things or to appreciate the wisdom of a universal plan for peace. Only three of them have so far attempted to give utterance to such thoughts—and even they have failed to point to a successful way of abolishing their calling, probably because they do not understand how to do so. Those three soldiers who have been honest enough, brave enough, to speak their minds, to their own disadvantage, are Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson and Lord Allenby, and General Sir Ian Hamilton. All honour to them.

The habit of taking for granted everything that is said by militarists in Parliament and in Whitehall, is leading well-meaning people into false avenues, sensible people who honestly desire to meet the exigencies of the moment in a realistic manner. Every government to-day is necessarily a militaristic government, because the existing type of governmental hierarchy depends on force for its very existence.

It is pathetically evident, from my experience in addressing large numbers of people all over

England on the subject of international welfare and prosperity, and questioning them and listening to their answers, that the vast majority of people are being doped into a sense of false security by not being told that owing to the leaping progress of science there is now no such thing as "defence" as we used to know it, that there never will be again, and that for that very reason we must begin to think all over again from a new point of perspective.

As I have already stated, Captain Liddell Hart, eminent military commentator, has told us that in all probability a British Expeditionary Force will never be able to leave these shores again for the Continent, because enemy air-power will not permit the embarkation. This I believe to be true.

A similar reasoning applies to the transport of food in American and other ships across the ocean to us. Battles may be fought and won on the high seas still, and food convoys may still be able to sail safely under naval guard, but they must make landing, they must enter or leave ports where, thanks to the generosity of a corrupt science, the enemy of England will be able to attack the ships from the air at the shore bases or in narrow seas, thus starving us out in a very short space of time. We cannot possibly provide ourselves with large stocks of food, owing to grave technical difficulties.

The fact must not be forgotten—although it is never mentioned—that the anti-aircraft gun is

still as ineffective as it was in 1918, despite all the gadgets that have been invented, and the loud talk of sound-recording and spotting devices. The velocity and the size of the shell have remained stationary, while the aeroplane itself flies faster and manœuvres faster and with greater agility than ever before. It was a difficult enough target in the closing stages of the Great War ; to-day science has made it many more times difficult as a target for the ground guns. In the last war everyone came to realize that the anti-aircraft gun was of no real utility, except perhaps that its noise soothed the nerves of elderly militarists of both sexes !

Captain Liddell Hart sees some benefit in the soothing of the nerves of the civil population by the fire of the anti-aircraft guns during an invasion. I see none. Long ago I gave up the idea that a sense of false security is beneficial in warfare. The only security worth offering to the people is, I believe, that security which comes from straight-dealing, from being honest with them, and being honest with the potential enemies so that the motives for future wars may be abolished.

Quite recently a class of forty-five British military officers made an extended tour of the battle-fields of France, in order to work out to a conclusion—without troops, of course—some of the lessons of the battles of 1914–1918 ! Think of it ! Most military men who took part in the war in France and Flanders know quite well, if they

care to look the facts in the face, that such battles can never be fought again. Even if it did come to pass that the authorities desired such battles to be fought, the troops could not be ferried across the Channel to carry out the dance of death—nor, I believe, would the cannon fodder be so misled as to consent to do so.

I wonder if these forty-five officers who have been trudging the battle-fields of France in search of future wisdom, spent most of their days in bed and most of their nights stumbling about the cultivated fields—because if ever a military lesson was learned from the last war it was that most of the battles were lost because the higher commanders, miles distant from the scenes of action, interfered with colonels commanding battalions and, sticking to the worn-out book of rules, dictated that night operations should not form part of the game as confusion arose under cover of darkness and men lost their way! So it was that the war jogged on like 1066 and all that, while men lost not their way, but their lives, and higher commanders became more and more confused in broad daylight.

I wonder what this recent staff tour of officers did, or if they did anything like that which was done to me in 1906 and 1909 during a similar performance of military intelligence. In 1906 I took part in a regimental tour based on Reading; for two whole days, at the railway hotel, a scheme was worked out for the billeting of troops on the left bank of the Thames and the



passage of the river at Caversham Bridge, with special attention to lessons obtained from the Battle of Newbury, fought in 1643 ! The joke of the whole thing was that I drove out to Newbury in one of the earliest motor-cars to hear a lecture on the battle of 1643 from my commanding officer—while I was forbidden to use a motor-car, theoretically, in the working out of my portion of the plan, for the transport of troops or even a few specialists I desired to rush forward for the demolition of a bridge. Time, mark you, was the essence of the whole scheme.

Well, three years later, at an examination for promotion, run on somewhat similar lines, I was ploughed for entirely destroying the scheme of the examiners at the very outset by putting a battalion of infantry into motor transport (on paper, of course) which I could quite well have done, because I found transport and commandeered it, in my imagination. By this manœuvre, and by a wide encircling movement, I took my enemy in reverse and captured the commander and the entire staff of the troops opposed to me, thus petrifying all opposition and enabling me to march through and mop up everything that came my way !

Mr. Baldwin has told us that democracies are usually two or three years behind dictators ; but I wonder if he realizes that the only dictators who exist in our midst—those in the military departments of Whitehall—are not only three years behind the dictators across the water, but are

apparently still thinking in terms of Julius Cæsar and forgetting all about Napoleon who, with all his faults, did manage to get things done.

The blindness, the wilful stupidity, the woolly-thinking, are always with us—particularly in regard to air-raid precautions which the Government has instituted in order to make the population war-minded, to prepare them for shocks, to mesmerize them into a false belief that they are being really looked after by a benevolent authority whose efficiency, alas, is as dead as Queen Anne. It is a trick of the Government (urged on by its military technical advisers) to dragoon well-meaning and quite harmless Bumbles of the local authorities into carrying out its absurd suggestions for civil defence. If the co-operation is not forthcoming, the Government is able to use coercion by taking advantage of the requirements of local authorities in other directions and using these as a lever in order to compel the dissenting localities to adopt air-raid precautions against their better judgment. It is a most dangerous method of thrusting militarism down the unwilling throats of local authorities.

I know of a case where the local governing body resolutely refused to have anything to do with air-raid precautions. The men holding sway in that particular council were wiser, and more honest, than the type of individuals usually found arrogating themselves to little Cæsarships in urban affairs. Applications had been made by the authority concerned for a grant in aid of

housing, which was urgently required by the people. This grant was systematically delayed, referred back, reconsidered, refused—while the rate-papers waited patiently for the official permission finally to proceed with the house-building. Still it did not come . . . until one day the local council decided to adopt a recommendation of the Home Office in regard to the “humanitarian” work of life-saving *after* an air-raid has taken place. Hitherto they had persistently refused to listen to the suggestions for the provision of so-called gas-proof rooms and shelters and so on ; but within an amazingly short time of the Home Office receiving the assurance of the council that they would be responsible for life-saving work under an air-attack, the long-delayed authority for the housing scheme was sanctioned !

Just a coincidence, I was told ; although I was by no means the only one who promptly decided that the Home Office, grateful for small mercies, were satisfied that the thin edge of the military wedge was good enough to be going on with. The first round went to Whitehall ! Unfortunately, the people for whom the houses were required are the very people who will be the cannon-fodder in the next war, and the victims of bombs in those very houses, Government “defensive” precautions notwithstanding.

Military commentators are still busy discussing the size and character of armies and navies, the possibility or impossibility of sinking a battleship

by bombing, or of the bomber being driven off by the battleship. They did the same thing before the Great War, and then seem to have forgotten—or to have agreed to forget—that the Great War proved the Navy to be completely wrong in regard to the battleship and its vulnerability to the submarine. Grave falsities are being dished up to the people—to the cannon-fodder—in connection with defence, reprisals, and the power of the air arm. Authority tries to persuade us that all is well, and that black is truly white. But if all is well, why bother the whole civil population with air-raid precautions, gas-masks, and gas-drill, and dragoon and coerce them into lining up in the ranks of defence? Surely the systematic drilling of the population is a confession of the complete inadequacy of the defensive measures against aerial bombardment which the Government promises us as a sop to our intelligent fears.

There is one aspect of the whole question that is never touched upon by those military commentators and arm-chair theorists—and that is the possibility, the probability, of revolution in this country should war over England break out and the people be doomed because of the inability of our rulers to read the writing on the wall. I, personally, cannot see how a revolt in this country could be avoided if we were subjected to aerial invasion. And I do not see why it should be avoided. I should be more than surprised if the betrayed civilians were calmly to submit to the

doom brought upon them by their false leaders, were idly to lie down and die without having a shot at stringing up to the lamp-posts those responsible for the visitation of horror and massacre.

I know that militarists will say that such a performance would not be "permitted" in England, and that the authorities would intervene. Oh, yes, they would intervene all right—with bayonets and revolvers. That is why the authorities want sufficient men and boys in uniform to "discipline" the cannon-fodder, to prevent the panic-stricken, fear-maddened mobs letting loose the dogs of war on their own leaders. The intervention would be British Fascism—not in a black shirt, but in some other fashionable disguise.

I invite the attention of the bishops, priests and deacons to this forecast, which is seldom found outside revolutionary writings. I am not a revolutionary. I am a pacifist. But I am bound to take note of what is likely to happen if misguided and brainless men are given a free hand.

I know that this cuts right across the idealism of the Old School Tie—I often wear one myself!—but to me it is the true reply to the military commentators and critics who say that men like Mr. Aldous Huxley and Canon "Dick" Sheppard have no constructive alternative to offer to the present policy of defence. We say that there is no such thing as defence—in the military sense of the word—due to the fact that the discoveries of scientists have been misallied to the

forces of destruction and death. The scientists admit that themselves. All the foolish talk of balloon aprons to protect London or barricade the Channel coast is sheer nonsense dished out to give that sense of security that is so false, so iniquitous—especially when we know, beyond that, that science is making it possible for the planes of war to fly at a height of 30,000 feet, where they will be invisible and inaudible, but by no means impotent.

As a war-resister I am sometimes asked what I would do in the event of the cannon-fodder revolting against the powers that be, under the stress of invasion. My pacifism is entirely limited to the horizon of war; it does not preclude men either protecting themselves from lunatics or safeguarding their country from treachery. I believe that if war comes to England it will be because of the treachery of the ruling classes. One has only to turn to the history of the Russian Revolution—which really began to take practical form in Baku in 1902, under Stalin—to know that while the means determine the ends people are often driven to using those means within their own countries because of the system of capitalism which must inevitably end in a class clash. Nothing can circumvent it—unless the ruling classes are wise enough to profit by the living lesson of Russia and meet the workers half-way—not in a spirit of condescension but on equal terms.

I do not know what I should do if war came

over England and the proletariat revolted. I am quite certain, however, that I would sympathise with them because I am equally certain that they never have had, or look like having, a square deal from those whose wealth and power are derived from the workers in the first place.

This, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York may say to be rank treason and revolt. Would to God that every leader in the Established Church of England had made himself liable, during the last twenty years at least, to be tried for treason, for his share of responsibility in denying to Cæsar those things which Cæsar has no right to claim, and for demanding for Christ those things for which He stands and they, the Church leaders, are supposed to stand.

In his book, *Europe in Arms*, Captain Liddell Hart says :

“ A scientific habit of thought is the last thing that military education and training have fostered. Perhaps that is an unalterable condition, for the Services might hardly survive if they parted company with sentiment—if the bulk of their members detached themselves from the loyalties which are incompatible with the single-handed loyalty to truth that science demands.”

Are we to be the victims of military sentimentality ? Or are we to be saved by the realism of “ Dick ” Sheppard ?

I know of no reason why the world should not be shaped by the revival advocated by "Dick" Sheppard and George Lansbury, on purely practical lines, and I see no reason why the cannon-fodder of the world should be doomed to be the slaves and victims of this military sentimentality and snobbery to which Captain Liddell Hart refers.

The army exists for war—and not for peace. That cannot be repeated too often. Yet there are those—and many—who seem convinced that the only way to prepare for peace is to arm for war, for the next war! That is where the double-lying is proved. Military preparedness *is* war. How can you honestly imagine it to be peace?

Let me explain. If you ask the average Englishman when his country fought its last war he will probably tell you that the Great War ended in 1918, while, with that wonderful manner so annoying to colonials, he will look down his nose at you with contempt and wonder how you could be so stupid.

So stupid! The hostilities of the Great War ceased on November 11th, 1918. But that is not the answer; and I can assure the Englishman that it was not his last war either. The circumstances relating to the Englishman's war, which is still going on, are peculiar in that the "last" war which he embarked upon was an Irish war, which is a continuation of a war that has been in progress for many hundreds of years and has set a



standard of revolt that will probably be the cause of the complete disruption of the British Empire, thanks to the undying sentimentality within the Services and the ruling classes.

Being blest as I am with characteristics derived from several countries—I am what is popularly known as Anglo-Irish—I have usually no difficulty in penetrating the veneer of humbug and hypocrisy of Englishmen, Irishmen, Ulstermen, Dagos and Bolos! I am, therefore, able to appreciate what the average Englishman is not able to appreciate—that his “last” war is actually that war he has sustained with considerable success from the time of Queen Elizabeth, to the discomfiture of that British Commonwealth which has been established and held by force of arms. The means determine the ends, and Ireland affords a striking example of that axiom in practice, or malpractice.

In Ireland we have a people, full of the joy of life, sportsmen, humorists, sentimentalists if you like, who, while they have changed in many ways have never relinquished their pride of nationality and their determination to be the friends of England—but the slaves of nobody. Ireland is one of ~~the~~ most civilized, if not *the* most civilized, of all the countries in the world, and the Irish, as a nation, have left their mark in the realm of progress throughout the world, while they have always contributed to fighting and revolt, which is born in them because of their unfortunate

geographical proximity to the England that has always desired to "own" her.

Professor Gogarty not so long ago stated a truism when he said that the two factors which had contributed most to the hostility between England and Ireland were :

- (1) The act of union ;
- (2) The Irish Sea.

Had there been no sham union and had there been no Irish Channel, England would have been overrun and eventually governed by the Irish, in the same way as they have been overrun and governed by the Scots ! It is difficult for the English to turn up their noses at the dictators until they have themselves cast off their dictatorial methods within the Empire.

The Irish problem has an important bearing on the Indian problem, more important by far than the average Englishman imagines. One of my grandfathers, who was a servant of John Company, and later of the Madras Civil Service, and who spent all his active life in India and for India, was at heart an Indian Home Ruler. My other grandfather, after many years of army service, became a resident magistrate in Ireland and was secretly an Irish Home Ruler. Both were Protestants and both knew that Home Rule is as necessary for nations as it is for individuals. No two men knew their own minds about themselves better, no two men fought for the welfare of the British Empire more, and no two men

permitted to a greater extent Home Rule for others.

One of the leading English newspapers, on the day on which the Indian Congress decided not to take office and assume power in the Legislative Council, stated in a leading article that the Congress men were "shirking" responsibility. Could anything be more ludicrous than that? When an organization composed of thinking men and women, backed by millions of uneducated people, decline to go back on their previously considered decision not to help the new Indian Constitution but to smash it, they are called "shirkers." Rather would it not be that had they gone back on their previous decision and let their followers down, those Congress Party leaders would really have been "shirkers"?

In Ireland Mr. De Valera and Mr. Cosgrave were both rebels through the 1916 revolt; they were both Republicans, and they were both tried for their lives and condemned to death and penal servitude instead; they were both out for a Republican Ireland. I hold no brief for either of the big parties in Ireland to-day, but it is surely evident that the unrelenting stand that Mr. De Valera has taken is the stand Mr. Cosgrave originally took in the matter of Ireland's future. Undoubtedly, Mr. Cosgrave's policy, in appearance, was more "respectable" than Mr. De Valera's, but is it not the fact that the standard of "respectability" by which both are

judged has been set by the English adherents of a war policy, which, however benevolent and righteous it may have appeared, and however sanctimonious and "just" it may have been thought to be, has led the world into a violent cleavage which threatens the very end of civilization unless the same "respectable" people discard the sham and get down to facts and cast off the cloak of sentimentality which is now so frayed.

There lie the seeds of the "next war"—but a continuation, or prolongation, of the old, old war for possessions in which the British Empire has played such a foremost role. We have set a standard that other nations have learned to aspire to. Travellers in Italy, before the Abyssinian "conquest," will tell you that when the Fascists openly discussed the "attaching" of Ethiopia they proudly referred the questioner and the critic to the history of Britain and intimated that they would adopt "the English system."

The position taken up by England in regard to Ireland and India<sup>1</sup> has its counterpart in the world situation to-day, more particularly in the case of Germany. There is no doubt that it is easier to get the best out of a man by treating him fairly. But have the Germans been treated fairly? What can we expect from a nation stung

<sup>1</sup> I venture to forecast great trouble in India, where by force of arms on the one side and force of necessity on the other a proper constitution will be eventually granted.

to defensive action under the lash of ill-treatment and vindictiveness ? World peace does not come in that manner. And, anyhow, we are far too like the Germans to be allied against them, and far too unlike the French to be allied with them. In any case, allies are of little use, because they are unreliable and are seldom the same for long. We never fight the same nation twice running ! Also, there is no reason whatever to be afraid of Italy, whose record is one of "retreat," despite the fact that we funked a fight with her over Abyssinia.

The war in Spain has set the pace ; it is another glaring example of what can come of international lying, cheating, and revoking. One is entitled to draw the conclusion from the British Government's extraordinary behaviour that a victory for General Franco in Spain would not be unwelcome, while at the same time the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is head of a Department of State called a church, denounces the Italians for the massacre of the Abyssinians in Adis Ababa. Yet he must, on account of his state position and his declared hatred of Communism, back Franco and the Spanish brand of Fascism. Probably His Grace thought the Red Radical Government of Spain was Communist in character ; but Joe Chamberlain was originally a Republican and Radical before he climbed the social scale !

Why does not the Archbishop denounce strife in all its forms and stick to his guns as a servant

of Christ, instead of at one moment denouncing Mussolini for the obvious wrong he has done in Africa, and at the same time failing to denounce Franco for the obvious wrong he has done in Spain as a result of his forceful attempt to overthrow a constitutional government, democratically elected? Is it not clear that the English Church and the Roman Church behave according to the colours of the combatants and not by the honest standards of right and wrong?

Let us suppose for a moment that Mussolini and Hitler called a conference to-morrow and told the world that they had decided to lay down their arms if the rest of the world would do the same, because they had come to realize that the affairs of the world could only be settled peacefully in that way. What would be the attitude of the Archbishops of England?

They would immediately reply that they welcomed the unexpected gesture as an Act of God ; they would cause the church bells to ring out the joyful news of peace. And would they not declare that the ways of the two dictators were in accordance with the ways of Christ? Of course they would !

We know that as church leaders, as declared followers of Christ, they could not describe the offer of world peace as otherwise. That being so, the ordinary Englishman is entitled to ask why the ecclesiastical dignitaries do not themselves take the great initiative and set that shining

example for the rest of the civilized world to follow. They know Christ's teachings. They must by the very reason of their high office be acquainted with His word and His blessed example. Why, oh, why, cannot they follow on and inspire their fellows to do likewise?

No, we are creating a mighty machine—a fearsome machine of war and destruction—a Frankenstein that will overwhelm its masters as well as its masters' dupes, once the feeble brakes are released and the cruel wheels begin to revolve.

This brings me finally to the most important aspect of the game of war, based as it is on technique. Politicians, and others like them, invariably select what they are going to do and then decide how they are going to do it. They fix on the methods of tackling the problems, and fail to consider whether it is possible for the problems to be solved by military means or not. They merely suit themselves and assume that the military machine can be bent in any direction to suit their particular requirements. That is a fallacy history has failed to teach us.

The Kaiser, having planned through his General Staff the means for overcoming the French on the basis of the defence of his own country, was unable to stop the advance of the machine towards the French when he wished to hold his hand in the West and attack, instead, in the East, in 1914. Like other statesmen and

politicians, he had moulded his military machine in the way he fondly imagined it would serve his purpose. But when the wheels began to turn and he tried to stop the mighty machine after mobilization, he found that he could not call a halt in the West for the simple reason that the machine he had helped to create had become so unwieldy, so inflexible, so all-powerful in its own impetus, that it could serve neither for the general peace of Europe nor for the sustaining of his own independence. The war that he set out to win did not attain its object. Germany was defeated, its civil population was decimated, and although Mr. Lloyd George failed to hang the Kaiser, and although the Kaiser retired to Doorn, where, after the manner of the fairy story, he married again and lived happily ever afterwards, England, fighting for democracy, found herself surrounded by a bunch of dictators the like of which had never been heard of, or imagined, before. England failed to achieve her object, although she saved herself from being dismembered. But—most surely she will not save herself again if ever she tries the same tricks.

It is now extremely doubtful if Germany would have endeavoured to smash the British Empire had England stayed out of the Great War—which she could have done had it not been for the entanglements of the Treaty guaranteeing the independence of Belgium. The British public were stampeded into war-action with the subtle



cry of "Poor little Belgium!" ; but, as events have so clearly shown, the fate of Belgium was not really worth the life of a single British soldier. To-day the Belgians themselves have liberated themselves from the necessity of being "guaranteed," because they know quite well that such a guarantee would be ineffective and would spell their complete ruin under the modern conditions of war.

Politicians must be warned that they cannot play with the military machine in the same way that they adapt their policies to meet the needs of the moment or the safety of their seats at times of election to Parliament. The military machine which they help to create will not be bent to their will by doubtful means. In 1920 they knew they could not ask the British Army to assassinate the Irish and then repudiate the assassinations. Instead, they had to hire a gang of gangster murderers to do their foul work, thus completely defeating their own ends.

The Irish policy of underground fighting and assassination was adopted from the lesson obtained from the experience of the English in Spain during the Peninsular War, when the English armed the Spanish population in secret and set it against the invading forces of Napoleon.

The war technique of governments now is based on the amassment of men, money, and metal, and the destruction of public morale by the use of air-frightfulness. Inevitably, the democratic

reply to that in the next war will be subterranean fighting, sabotage, and revolt. Mr. Duff Cooper recently reiterated the old catch phrase that one volunteer was equal to three pressed men—a fact which the world war disproved. Does he not realize that one guerilla fighter, properly trained and suitably armed, is of inestimable value and is, proportionately, a much greater menace than three volunteers, conventionally attired and conventionally armed, wandering about ineffectively and gazing up at the air-bombers over which they have no control?

A midnight invasion in the air—over any country—is how the “next war” will probably be heralded; it will be the signal for armed men to march into the open. But it will also be the signal for the inception of guerilla warfare, on a world-wide scale, unseen and therefore more formidable.

One thing of which the Prime Minister is terrified, is that someone will press the trigger and release the flimsy brakes of the machinery of destruction, that machinery to which he and his fellow politicians have contributed so largely by the iniquitous rearmament policy. When people build great works and plan great achievements they are usually anxious to put their plans to the test so that their fellows will reap the benefit of their inventiveness and their vision. The same applies to works of armament—only, they benefit no one but the profiteer. They destroy—terribly

and finally—and no one knows that better than the Prime Minister and his colleagues, including the leaders of the church.

“The next war,” Captain Liddell Hart has said, “will begin where the last war left off.” The last war left off with the demoralization of the civilian populations of the Central Powers. The next war will begin with the same dread effect. Big battalions may move—not out of England!—only to be held up by rigid lines of defences; and although the bombers may go over in darkness to destroy the people’s morale, and although the guards will turn out to keep the populations of the world in order, thus heralding the arrival of world-wide Fascism, there will be set in motion the machinery of anarchism and the clash of class against class. All the ancient manœuvres of soldiers and sailors will be swept away, strange new orders of fighting and killing will be established, and in the class warfare, which is the natural result of the “last war,” we will witness—if we live—the beginning of the crash of our present civilization. Even the advocates of complete rearmament know that, and they discuss it in awed whispers, well away from the propagandizing microphones of the B.B.C.

It is not possible for us to live in this world for one second to-day without being made to realize that most of our ills are the direct outcome of the “last war,” and that, as the means determine the ends, the people of the world must never

permit the next war to come upon them and their children.

Violence achieves nothing—but violence. Non-violence is an effective force we have still to learn a great deal about. We were told by the Government that their cancellation of the King's Imperial tour was due to His Majesty's wish to be at home during the first year of his reign. No doubt there was some truth in this, but how far was the Government's decision influenced by the victory of the Congress Party at the Indian polls, and the refusal of Congress to collaborate in the new Constitution of India? If everything were right and the British Empire were the happy unity it might be—and could be—the King would be able to move when and where he liked, within the Empire or outside of it, in perfect peace and security.

But—the force of non-violence has kept the King of England at home and has cancelled the great Imperial Tour. What use are the big guns and the aeroplanes to avert that?

Armaments will never bring peace. The only way civilization can be saved is for the Christian Churches to prove their Christianity and march towards pacifism. We have come to the parting of the ways. Science has won the race; it has transformed the whole world, including war. It has made war a madness and a massacre, a horror that will engulf victor and vanquished. If history is to teach us anything, then the only part of history which can help us in the future is

that portion occupying the first three hundred years of Christianity, when pacifism and Christianity went hand in hand.

What is required in the world to-day is something more than pleasant agreement with "Dick" Sheppard on all those things that do not seem to matter very much. People of every nationality, of every faith and creed, are waiting for the lead to sanity, to peace. People of great responsibility, declared Christian leaders, hesitate to make the choice and, instead, pay lip service to and applaud what they call "idealism." It is more than that. It is realism. It is the only realistic thing to-day.

I killed a good many men in the war that was to end all wars, personally, and by means fair or foul, in the mistaken idea that I was doing something in the defence of my mother, my wife, my child, and my friends. I am now convinced that it is the duty of everyone of us to kill the hypocrisy and humbug that are marching us relentlessly to the precipice of destruction. I am convinced that that is the only way we can truly defend our country and civilization.

The men I killed, or caused to be killed, between the years 1899 and 1921, lawfully or unlawfully, can never be offered as an excuse by you and me for the killing of women and children in 1937 and the years thereafter.

If the British Empire can be held together only by force, only by methods similar to those which Mussolini used in Abyssinia, then the Empire had

better perish. I shall be told that Mussolini "attacked" and that the British Empire never attacks. If the British Empire is attacked it will be because it has failed in its mission, in its duty, to solve the world's ills. Then, too, it will deserve to die.

## *Epilogue*

### SOWING AND REAPING

IN November, 1917, when Englishmen and Germans were in the death-grip of war, the Battle of Cambrai was at its height. The enemy's soldiers were driven headlong from their trenches to new defences by tanks which, for the first time in history, had been given precedence in attack *en masse*. The bells of St. Paul's rang out the joyful news that the will of God had been exercised in England's favour. What the German churches thought about it is not revealed !

Conditions in that part of the field of war were appalling ; mud up to the hocks of horses, and limbers derelict in swamps, made life more fit for wild fowl than wild men. The orders were : "Bourlon Wood will be attacked and captured by the 119th Infantry Brigade and held to the last man."

It was. . . .

In the catacombs of the Graincourt Church, five brigade staffs, with generals complete, a tank colonel, a cavalry commander, and every other kind of soldier, made their plans, issued their orders, and awaited results.

Man must eat, even in battle, after a time—

and so it was that Cook Selbwy prepared tea and a beefsteak for me, who was too far gone really to eat but who had too much ahead not to eat at all. In a little room furnished after the trench manner—the catacombs had held German soldiers—were two German electricians who had been captured during our rapid advance. It had been their job to keep the vaults dimly lit with electric light, and they had either been left behind and forgotten, or they themselves had forgotten on purpose to retreat, in the hope that they would be captured. Or they had stayed behind to lay a land-mine and had been overwhelmed by our advance.

David Starrett, the General's helper, saw these two men and, after the custom of the British soldier, started a conversation with them in the only "understandable" language—"pidgin" French. Cigarettes followed.

STARRETT (*to the cook*) : "Have you got some tea and steak for these two Jerries?"

SELBWY : "No, not \* \* \* likely ; there's not enough for ourselves !"

STARRETT : "We can't let them starve."

SELBWY : "Well, you've got some tea and beef yourself. Give 'em yours !"

The prisoners got their tea and beefsteak, some bread, margarine, and jam. And they devoured the food like hungry hounds. White bread, too ! The "conversation" continued for some hours. Then the Jerries slept a sleep of contentment, and when they awakened, refreshed



and at ease, they found how to smile again. The language was annoyingly limited ; but Starrett knew, by gesticulations and signs, that his " prisoners " wanted to tell him something of great importance. Fortunately, the little, fat French interpreter knew a bit of German and, reluctantly at first, he agreed to listen to *les salles Boches*.

Suddenly, while he was talking with them, he jumped up excitedly, gesticulating madly. He sprang through the door into the room of a British general. . . .

GENERAL : " What the devil's the matter with you ? "

INTERPRETER (*excitedly*) : " We are all doomed ! "

GENERAL : " Who told you that ? "

INTERPRETER : " Two German prisoners. "

GENERAL : " But you always say you never believe the Germans ! "

INTERPRETER (*almost unintelligible with excitement*) : " I do now. We are to die ! "

GENERAL : " Steady on—and stand still, for God's sake, and try to talk sense. Don't wave your arms about like that ; stand up to attention. It may help you. There—fire ahead. "

INTERPRETER (*calmer now*) : " Those Germans say there is enough explosive under the stairs to blow us all to—to—what you call it?—to Blazes ! It is ready to go *up* any moment ! "

GENERAL (*shouting to signalling officer*) : " Campbell ! "

CAMPBELL : " Sir ! Coming, sir."

GENERAL : " Get your fellows to examine the place they say is mined. If it is, cut all the leads you can find, at once, and then get a working party to remove the explosive up aloft. All hands to the pumps—or, rather, the booby traps ! "

CAMPBELL : " Right, sir."

And so it was, just as the Germans had said.

We had a lot to be thankful for that David Starrett was not only kind to his two German " prisoners," but that they fell into the right hands, for had they been summarily executed we should never have known about the land-mine until we were hurtling through the obnoxious air of Graincourt's cellars, with the ruins of a large church piling on top of us and the mouth of the steep, and only, entrance closed against us. We should have had no hope of escape—ever ; if any of us had been left alive.

The military dislocation would have been most annoying to the higher command, because even the worst of dud administrations takes time to replace ; but the lower grades, far away on the waiting list for promotion, might have been glad, for the brass-hat " bag " would have been vast and out of all proportion to its actual worth.

But—we were saved ; thanks to Starrett and his bit of kindness with his beefsteak. (Militarists, procrastinators, and would-be pacifists, please note !)

When it came to recommending Starrett and the little French interpreter for decorations suitable to the services performed by them whereby so much loss was averted, the Higher Command replied : “ But they were only doing their duty ! ”—a curious reasoning on the part of men who spent their war days far from danger, collecting honours and awards, which they often drew out of a hat as does a conjurer his rabbits. It surely was a strange retort to come from an organization, the chief of which received £100,000, a Peerage, and a Field-Marshal’s baton for doing what the ordinary men called “ duty ” and others preferred to call “ service ” !

Let us look at the other side of the military medal ; let us inquire about the greatness of Imperialism. . . .

How was the British Empire built up ? By kindness—or cruelty ? The answer is—by neither. Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen spread to the unknown lands and at times did very kind things and at times perpetrated most cruel deeds. They were opportunists. Few of them were wantonly cruel—many of them were laboriously kind.

Out of this “ Colonization ” grew strange stuff. Colonials are, on the whole, more “ tough ” and “ hard-boiled ” than the men who planted them. There are, of course, exceptions. In war the British Colonial shines above most men ; in

peace, his outlook is different, and often difficult—at least, in the eyes of the Little English.

Hence, mistakes are made—far-reaching mistakes, too.

The world's future depends on mandates. That is an important truth, frequently, and willfully, overlooked. As time goes on, if the world grows less foolish, the policy will be extended.

Are the British Mandates—that is, the English Mandates—a success?

Yes—and No!

We give them up when they don't pay. We keep them at all costs—even at a loss—when they are useful, when geographically they meet a strategic requirement in the Imperial world.

Who really cares a damn for the natives of Tanganyika? Not the English! But the vision of Cecil Rhodes of the Cape-to-Cairo route, and the provision of modern air-bases make a big difference. That is what really matters. And why not? We are Imperialists, are we not?

And what about Dominion Mandates? The Dominions are self-governing, but are they British? They are when it suits—and at the present it suits. But they all differ in accordance with their origin and evolution, and from the point of view of modernity and its demands they could not see eye-to-eye with drowsy Downing Street.

Ireland is a different story. It was evolved from revolution, and is in fact a Mother Country equal in status to England.

I know a great many of the Colonies, and nearly all the Dominions and India. Would I grant a mandate to the Dominions? No—not a “British” Mandate, because the standard is so different, except, perhaps, in the case of Ireland. An Australian, Canadian, South African, or New Zealand Mandate, as at present exists in certain cases, is quite a different matter.

The reason for the difference is this : in the Dominions there is no such thing as a “British” outlook. There cannot be. None of the Dominions are like England ; nor are they like each other. The only one with a similarity to England is New Zealand. Ireland has her own standard, but her proximity to England, despite the intervening sea, renders her make-up complementary to that of England.

The average “Colonial,” faced with local conditions and dangers, has been at times cruel to the natives ; in some of the Colonies the natives have actually been treated like dogs or cattle, to say nothing of their enslavement, of their vicious exploitation with little profit to themselves. Sjangbok rule used to be the order of the day in South Africa. But things are greatly improved there, although, in many cases, the “hide of a nigger” is still said to be as tough as the sjambok itself.

But—take note ! Into Africa once there came a man, a British officer of an English regiment, brought up in the Imperial tradition. He was in Africa when I was there. He had served for

several years in a crack Colonial Corps, in another part of Africa, keeping order for the Crown.

Here is an extract from his carefully kept diary :

5.5.1903. " My horse-boys cut my horse's mane, so I gave them each six lashes for it. Seems brutal, but it is not really.

6.5.'03. " My two boys ran away last night and took my best horse with them as far as — ; there they hit him over the eye with an axe, cutting in over an inch. Not content with that they cut his mouth out of all shape with another axe. I have got the police out for them, and I can honestly say if I do catch them that horse shall have justice. Low brutes to do such a thing. I had rather they had bashed me instead. As I am writing a runner has just come in to say that the two boys have been seen. So there is some hope of them being caught.

" Three hours later. The boy has been caught. Was sighted in barracks by my head-horse-boy, so I turned out five soldiers who traced him through the bush for some miles, but could not effect their capture. They sent in my horse-boy to tell me, so I promptly mounted my boy on a horse and gave him a native sword. Off he went, and

for an hour I heard no more, when suddenly my boy came in on a very hot horse with the information that he had caught the boy, having headed him off and run him into the line of soldiers. Rather a pretty capture I think. Now, I may have been hard and cruel, but that horse had saved my life in the — show, and naturally I felt it more keenly. When I saw the awful gashes made I asked the boy to own up to his guilt, promising to hand him over to the Civil powers if he did. But as he would not own to it, I gave him something like eighty lashes—quite the most severe thrashing any black man has had in these parts. Then I told him if he did not speak the truth I should continue, but he owned to it and I have now put him in irons and shall hand him over to the Civil powers and I think he will get two years' hard labour, which he will do at —. I wonder what readers will think of this. All I can say is that the horse has only got half his justice.

10.5.'03. (Sunday). "Had my two boys brought up before the Magistrate and one got one year, the other a week."

It is fair to say that such conduct was rare in that part of the British Empire at the time. It would not have been tolerated for one second by those in supreme control. This lapse from decency was in reality the introduction of methods of barbarism into a newly annexed country ; it affords a good example of what can come out of initial injustice. The boys were ignorant of the ways of white men—we were newcomers then and had only just occupied the country. They were illegally flogged for making a mistake in the first instance. The subsequent cruelties inflicted on the horse were really the result of the British officer inflicting such cruelty on his servants during the heat of his anger. The second barbaric flogging (partly to make the boy “ own up ” and partly out of uncurbed rage) was the result of the officer’s original lack of reason and his unsuitability for the job allotted to him.

It should be noted that four days elapsed between the final flogging and the farcical trial by the magistrate. Probably the reason for the delay was in order that the wounds might heal up to some extent. The entire performance was illegal. But, alas, it was Imperial—and Imperialism covers a great multitude of sins.

This episode is typical of the manner in which some white men of British nationality demonstrated their duties throughout the Empire in the earlier days of Empire-building. Conditions are improving as education and the standard of



living improve in the native lands, but unfortunate episodes such as the one I have related have left behind a long-remembering hatred, of which we are now reaping the "benefit," particularly in India.

This, I shall be told, cannot happen to-day !

Note the following statement made to *Peace News*, the organ of the Peace Pledge Union, by Mrs. Mary Drury, when discussing the New Zealand Mandate and the work of the Children's League of Peace and Goodwill.

"Starting in New Zealand about six years ago, she next went to the Samoan Islands, where she tried to promote a better understanding between the natives and the New Zealand authorities :

"The Samoan people were very reticent about all the suffering they had passed through during the years of New Zealand administration. It was from Europeans that I heard the story and the reasons for the deep desire to be free of New Zealand rule.

"Their first experience of it was during the War when they witnessed the brutal way the deportation of German residents was carried out, many of whom were their intimate friends.

"Next, some 1600 young New Zealand troops were sent over, whose conduct disgusted the people. . . .

"The then Prime Minister of New Zealand, travelling that way, insisted on putting ashore on the island, although there were cases of the influenza plague on board. As a result, the

people were affected, and a quarter of the entire population died of the dread disease.

“Administrators were appointed whose high-handed treatment almost destroyed the beautiful communal mode of living of the people. As a result of their passive protest, Tamasese, their Chief, was martyred while following in a procession to welcome back an Australian who was manager of a trading firm.

*“Tamasese was shot not only while he was unarmed and unaggressive, but while he was actually imploring his people to keep the peace.”*

“Four chiefs also were shot who went to his rescue.

“The leading Samoans who were left were then driven into the bush and the villages surrounded in order to prevent food being sent to them and with the hope that the men would return to protect their wives and children. . . .”

Mrs. Drury then explained how the soldiers entered the quarters where women and children were asleep, in search for the men. When the Chief's widow afterwards asked the Administrator to see that no repetition of the indignity took place, he said roughly : “You must make your men come out of the bush and submit to us.”

“This we cannot do,” replied Mrs. Tamasese, “for it is not the custom in Samoa for women to take any part in administrative or political life.”

Mrs. Drury added that concern was felt at the influence on the Samoans of boxing matches, horse-racing and encouragement to bet and gamble, and the films provided by the Administration.

To quote this, I may be told, is sentimentalism. I maintain it is realism, and that these sort of things have to be faced within the Empire.

Imperially, we have done the same kind of thing all over the world, including Ireland, when the Black and Tans disgraced the English name seventeen years ago and so led to a reaction in the form of violent republicanism with which England is still faced to-day.

The means employed determine the ends achieved. Some of the black man's portion of the British Empire is in a state of ferment to-day, particularly because of the conduct of men unfit to govern ; and because Imperialism means rule by the sword, in all circumstances, when the points of view of inferior subjects clash with the requirements of superior authorities, hallowed by the Crown. It is very unfair to the Crown, and on those people, who are only human, who wear the crown.

Imperialism is based on cruelty, arrogance, and force. It cannot be otherwise. It has accounted for the physical and spiritual death of millions of people whose lives might have been lived in comparative peace, in accordance with their own standards, had they had the good fortune to be left to themselves.

Materialism is the whole evil, and the mother of Imperialism. Its sins are legion, and it not only caused the deaths of the men I killed, but is preparing the way for the wholesale slaughter of innocent women and children to-morrow.

How long will the voice of salvation cry unheard in the wilderness ?

A few days after completing the last pages of this book, I received the latest volume of the Official History of The War, compiled by the Historical Section of the Committee for Imperial Defence. It deals with the hostilities in France and Belgium in 1918—and it is official. In its pages I came again to the road at Strazeel where I had to shoot my own men to hold the line for England. That unforgettable day was April 9th, 1918. Two days later, about three miles away, the Commander-in-Chief issued his special order of the day, which has since become a part of history, and which became known as the “Backs To The Wall” message. It ran as follows :

### SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

By Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, K.T.,  
G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E., Commander-  
in-Chief, British Armies in France.

TO ALL RANKS OF THE BRITISH ARMY  
IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS

Three weeks ago to-day the enemy began his terrific attacks against us on a fifty-mile front. His objects are to separate us from the French, to take the Channel Ports, and destroy the British Army.

In spite of throwing already 106 Divisions into the battle and enduring the most reckless sacrifice of human life, he has as yet made little progress towards his goals.

We owe this to the determined fighting and self-sacrifice of our troops. Words fail me to express the admiration which I feel for the splendid resistance offered by all ranks of our army under the most trying circumstances.

Many amongst us now are tired. To those I would say that Victory will belong to the side which holds out the longest. The French Army is moving rapidly and in great force to our support.

There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man : there must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause each one of us must fight on to the end. The safety of our homes and the Freedom of mankind alike depend upon the conduct of each one of us at this critical moment.

D. HAIG, F.M.,  
Commander-in-Chief,  
British Armies in France.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS,  
*Thursday, April 11th, 1918.*

As a direct result of this order (which meant the shooting of our own men) a young Australian subaltern of the First Australian Division, issued

an order to his men which was picked up in the trenches by an Army liaison officer. The whole text of this amazing order is incorporated in a footnote in the Official History, page 249 :

“Special orders to No. . . . Section :

(1) This position will be held, and the section will remain here until relieved.

(2) The enemy cannot be allowed to interfere with this programme.

(3) If the section cannot remain here alive it will remain here dead, but in any case it will remain here.

(4) Should any man through shell-shock or other cause attempt to surrender he will remain here dead.

(5) Should all guns be blown out, the section will use Mills grenades and other novelties.

(6) Finally, the position as stated will be held.”

Was this young Australian subaltern perpetrating murder or not? Perhaps the Archbishop of York will be able to tell us. If he was committing murder, then the Special Order of the Day by the Field-Marshal Commander-in-Chief was a direct incitement to murder—to the murder of one’s own comrades, of one’s own brothers.

I was, alas, too old a hand at the game to require to be incited to murder—as is quite clear from this official record. I did my private shooting two days earlier, without higher orders,

because I had been trained in the tradition and knew every rule of the game of war by heart. Of course, my shooting is not referred to in the Official Diaries. It is not the thing to do, for a man to refer to himself as a murderer. There is a bald statement in the official narrative of those events. It reads :

“ Reinforced by the divisional engineers and pioneers, headquarters, under Brigadier-General Crozier, and brigade schools, the 119th, by 3.30 p.m., was holding a 4000 yards’ line,” and so on and on.

I owe it to the women and children of the present generation to tell the truth, the whole wretched truth, at the same time begging them to remember that what men sow, so shall they reap.

What men sow, so shall they reap : in other words, we are sowing armaments in order that we may reap war : we are sowing destruction in order that construction and progress may be more difficult to attain, if not unattainable.

Practical Christianity and practical progress inevitably go hand in hand ; where there is little or no Christianity there can be little or no progress.

Naval and Military progression having come to an end, way has been made for military aviation, which in its turn automatically becomes the servant of gangster rule, unless aviation itself is made the servant of the people, instead of their master.







